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INDIA
AND
COMMUNISM

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INDIA AND COMMUNISM

Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau,
Home Department,
Government of India



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PREFACE.

The title of this book, *India and Communism*, has been so chosen because, in addition to covering the period subsequent to the publication of Sir David Petrie's *Communism in India, 1924-1927*, it attempts to include a brief survey of the objects, successes, and failures of Communists working for a revolution in India ever since the Communist International decided to exploit this country. The book has been written for those whose official responsibilities require a general working knowledge of Communists' aims and methods in India and the countries on her borders. There are, it is felt, few officers of the Crown to whom such aims and methods should not be known; where the danger is common to all and when the enemy is constantly looking for weak spots in the structure, military, economic, industrial, political, educational, or whichever it may be, of the fortress to be taken, it is obvious that officers of every department of the State should be forewarned and therefore forearmed. The book will, I hope, also be read by those officers outside India who help us continuously by providing information regarding the subversive activities of Communists, Indian or of other nationalities, abroad; it is hoped that they will realise from its pages that their assistance has been of great value to us and, whether this is so or not, I take this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks to them for the unfailing support they have given. I may mention that the list of such helpers, were I in a position to publish it, would include reference to practically every country in Europe and Asia, remote islands in the Pacific, nearly half of Africa, and a dozen parts of the Americas.

I wish here to express my indebtedness to many, not all in the service of the British Crown, for the free use made of material supplied by them. For their co-operation I am deeply grateful and for making use of their information I feel I need not apologise, as I have seen enough to be convinced that all of them are only too anxious for us to pool our knowledge in the fight against

the gravest danger to the civilisation of the modern world—Communism as preached by the Third International.

It remains only for me to confess that I have, personally, only written one chapter of this book, though I hold myself responsible for every word written and, for the sake of convenience, have encouraged the use of the first person. The rest of the work has been done entirely by Mr. J. F. Cowgill, my Personal Assistant. This officer holds a post which provides sufficient work to appal anyone not well provided with ability, expedition, and devotion to duty. He has, however, within the space of a few months, found, or rather made, the time necessary for its production. I can only express my deep gratitude to him and the hope that his readers will consider that his expenditure of midnight oil has been justified. He has, naturally in the circumstances, received the loyal support of the members of my staff, and has brought specially to my notice the services of Messrs. C. H. Smith, C. H. Perry and R. D. Mackay.

H. WILLIAMSON,

Director, Intelligence Bureau.

DELHI,

1st March 1933.

GLOSSARY.

<i>Aika</i>	. . .	Unity.
<i>Akali</i>	. . .	Lit: Immortal. A term used for an extremist Sikh.
<i>Akali Dal</i>	. . .	A force of belligerent Akalis (<i>q.v.</i>).
<i>Amtorg</i>	. . .	American Trading Organisation (a Russian Corporation).
<i>Anushilan</i>	. . .	Lit: Improvement; culture. The name of the eastern section of the Bengal Revolutionary Party.
<i>Arcos</i>	. . .	All-Russian Co-operative Society.
<i>Babbar Akali</i>	. . .	Lit: Lion-like Akali (<i>q.v.</i>). Term used for a member of an extremist group of Sikhs who resorted to assassination and plunder.
<i>C.P.G.B.</i>	. . .	Communist Party of Great Britain.
<i>C.P.M.</i>	. . .	Communist Party of Malaya.
<i>Comintern</i>	. . .	Council of the Communist International and of its <i>alter ego</i> the Soviet Government.
<i>F.E.B.</i>	. . .	Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern (<i>q.v.</i>).
<i>Ghadr</i>	. . .	Mutiny.
<i>Girni Kamgar</i>	. . .	Mill Workers' Union.
<i>H.R.A.</i>	. . .	Hindustan Republican Association (or Army).
<i>H.S.R.A.</i>	. . .	Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (or Army).
<i>I.K.K.I.</i>	. . .	Executive Committee of the Communist International.
<i>Jugantar</i>	. . .	Lit: New Age. The name of the western section of the Bengal Revolutionary Party.
<i>Kirti</i>	. . .	Worker.
<i>Kirti Kisan Sabha</i>	. . .	Workers' and Peasants' Party.
<i>Kranti</i>	. . .	Revolution.
<i>Krestintern</i>	. . .	Peasants' International.
<i>Kuomintang</i>	. . .	The Nationalist Party of China.
<i>Majlis</i>	. . .	Association.
<i>Mazdoor Kisan</i>	. . .	Workers and Peasants.
<i>Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha.</i>		New Young India Society.

O.G.P.U. . . .	United States (of Soviet Russia) Political Department. (Formerly Cheka.)
P.K.I. . . .	Partai Kommunist Indonesia.
P.P.T.U.S. . . .	Pan-Pacific Trades Union Secretariat.
Politbureau . . .	Political Bureau. An organisation of nine or ten men who jointly form the head of the Government of Russia.
Profintern . . .	Red International of Trades' Unions (<i>i.e.</i> , for Industrial Workers).
R.I.L.U. . . .	Red International of Labour Unions (<i>vide</i> Profintern).
<i>Samya Sadans</i> . . .	Lit: Houses of Equality.
<i>Samyavadi Sabha</i> . . .	Equality Society.
<i>Samyavadi Sangha</i> . . .	Equality Society.
<i>Satyagraha</i> . . .	Passive Resistance.
<i>Swaraj</i> . . .	Self-rule or Self-government.
U.S.S.R. . . .	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

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PART ONE.

Introductory.

INDIA AND COMMUNISM.

CHAPTER 1.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT WORK.

A Wrong Diagnosis. A recent article in a Service journal contained the words, "By attributing to the U.S.S.R. plans which are not in its own interest or which are only realizable in the dim future, an attitude of mind may be induced which will ignore the gradual progress of an influence, the very nature of which is imperfectly understood. Such an attitude will be dangerous, especially from the point of view of the British Empire". The objects of this book are to attempt to correct that dangerous attitude where it exists, and to provide those whose duty and desire it is to help to preserve intact the existing peace and fabric of the British Commonwealth, with some of the salient facts of Communist machinations in the East generally and in India in particular.

The Method of this Book. The line to be taken is to show, in as few words as possible, how the sphere of Moscow's influence is gradually encircling India, how her agents are working with ant-like persistence in India itself, and with what weapons and to what extent the authorities in India are combating the menace. It will, perhaps, be convenient to move round India from west to south-east, from Persia to Java, giving a short authenticated account of Communist work and achievements in neighbouring countries or colonies, and to conclude with a short history of Communism in India and of the measures being taken to combat it. This being the general "line of march", it will be necessary, for reasons which will be explained at the time, to make three short digressions, one to the Kulu Valley, one into Burma, and the third to Shanghai.

What Communism Means. There are, however, one or two general points, a grasp of which will make more readable the pages which are to follow. Firstly, it should be realized that Moscow's policy has never been, at any rate since 1926, the direct conquest of power. It takes the more insidious form of peaceful penetration of existing organisations, of commercial or "cultural" propaganda, and of the secret promotion of general agitation against the Government whose powers it seeks to usurp. Its open activities are often unobjectionable; its secret machinations are many and well-concealed. Above all, the subversive movements to which it lends support are, in the words of Stalin himself, "national in form but proletarian in essence". When the critical moment arrives and the peasants or workers have been goaded into armed revolt, a Workers' Republic will be established and another Soviet State will have been added to the U.S.S.R. This, in essence, is Moscow's aim, and the hope of its wide achievement runs through the mountains of literature which her disciples have produced and are still producing. That it has been the basis of Soviet policy in the East since Communism first became a power to be reckoned with is proved by a pronouncement made by the Third International in 1919 to the effect that nationalist movements in the East would receive its support, "as they tend to upset the existing authority, while not opposing revolutionary aspirations".

Its Application to India. Secondly, it is necessary to apply this general policy to India. A former Home Member of the Government of India has recently written that "the only appeal that Communism can make in India is to the predatory instincts which are to be found throughout the whole country among the 'have-nots', or those who prefer living by their wits to living by honest work. The turbulent crowds in the towns can be raised at any moment by the prospects of loot". But the "have-nots" in many parts of India constitute not only the most numerous but also the most virile section of the population, and in the light of what has been written above, and particularly of Stalin's

formula, any effective subversive movement (except, perhaps, that of Gandhi, who has at times revealed a capricious willingness to compromise with the powers that be), whatever its character, is welcome to Moscow. It is known (and the knowledge is based on information many times confirmed) that Moscow's present intense interest in everything Indian is prompted mainly by the belief that her doctrine will be allowed greater play under an Indian Government than under the present régime.

Communist Training Schools. It is almost certainly for this reason that Moscow is even now welcoming to its bosom the Sikh *Ghadr* Party, a number of whom are on their way to Russia for training in Russian academies. Such "students" are being drawn not only from India and America (where the Party's headquarters are situated), but also from East Africa and Fiji, in both of which places there exist centres of Indian Sikh disaffection. Some idea of the kind of training that they will receive is given by a first-hand report of the Communist school in Tashkent, where instruction is given in methods of capturing a city with the help of 1,000 men. The plan is, according to this report, to divide the available material into several groups each of which will be placed in a strategic point, such as the post office, the telegraph office, the electric power station or the water-works, where the component members will be employed as ordinary workmen. At the appointed hour these Communist agents will assume control and will paralyse the government of the city. The methods by which Leningrad was captured are to be employed elsewhere. How near a handful of raiders came to achieving much the same results (by less laborious methods) in Chittagong is a matter of recorded history.

A Concrete Example. For the benefit of those who consider that Communist domination holds no terrors, it may be as well to quote a few lines from a recent Consular report from the Near East. "The situation in the Caucasus during May", it reads, "was reported to have grown worse. Scarcity of food, clothing and also of houses was very acute. People travelled

from Tiflis to Erivan" (a matter of a hundred miles or so) "and even further afield, to get the bare necessities of every-day life. Living accommodation is terrible; hundreds of men are reported to live in a single caravanserai.

"Public health is terribly bad. Owing to undernourishment and poor living accommodation many diseases are prevalent, especially among children, and the new generation is feeble, sickly and subject to many serious diseases, notably tuberculosis. . . .

"Many villages have revolted as a whole. The Soviets treated the rebels with absolute cruelty, . . . swept entire villages, killing the women, old men, and children, instead of the fighting villagers whom they failed to round up. Hundreds of old poor villagers and women were exiled to Siberia in place of their rebel sons and husbands."

Even when due allowance has been made for exaggeration—inevitable when the main source of information is probably the refugees themselves—there still remain the conspicuous facts that this particular report was confirmed in all material details by the dispatch of a German correspondent to his paper and that similar conditions undoubtedly prevail in other Oriental areas where Communism has obtained a substantial footing. Their application to an independent India can better be imagined than described.

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CHAPTER 2.

THE LESSONS OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION.

China, a Base for Operations in India. It seems hardly possible to do justice to the subject of the present work without making a brief reference to events in China, which, though they are not, strictly speaking, within the scope of my task, except in so far as the westerly provinces of Sinkiang and Yunnan are concerned, have none the less an important lesson to bring to students of Communism in the East. The importance of China's message to India, in particular, is greatly enhanced by the knowledge that, even so long ago as 1925, Zinoviev proclaimed that, instead of the "well-trodden paths" to India through Persia and Afghanistan—paths well observed by the British—it was China that had "become for us the central starting-point for action in India". China's importance to Moscow was not only as an "incendiary centre for revolutionary and moral action", but also as a strategical base for real technical contact with India. The fighting slogan of the Communists was, "Viâ revolutionary China to the Federal Republic of the United States of India". The *International Press Correspondence* of the 9th July 1925 voiced the hopes and aspirations of Communist Russia in the words: "China has revolted to-day; to-morrow Indo-China and India will rise. Shanghai, Hong Kong, Peking, and Canton have revolted to-day; to-morrow Calcutta and Madras will rise". That these hopes proved barren is due more to circumstances outside of Moscow's control than to lack of effort to bring them to fulfilment.

Communist Penetration. The previous chapter has displayed some of the fruits of Communism in a corner of the Near East, and it is my present purpose briefly to appreciate, with one eye fixed always on India, the ravages which an advanced stage of unhampered Communist penetration has wrought in Republican China in the course of a comparatively short period. The justification lies in my strong adherence to the view that the examination of a living picture of what Communism can achieve when left to its own devices, is well

worth the time spent upon it. *Experientia docet*, and it is only by a close study of like cause and like effect that provision can be made against the dangers of the future.

Some Fallacies. Before a start is made, it would be as well to make it clear that the fallacy, so glibly voiced and so rapidly believed in India prior to 1928, was equally prevalent amongst both foreign and indigenous observers in China in the early days of the Communist troubles there. Even when events in China and in Java were cited as examples of the powerful and baneful results which Communists had been able to achieve amongst Oriental populations, the thinking man in the Indian street was wont to argue: "But India is different. Bolshevism is the negation of religion. Its doctrines cannot possibly thrive amongst a people whose social fabric is based on religion. Bolshevism connotes equality of status. India is the home of caste and feudalism. The teachings of Communism can never take deep root in this country." So, too, his counterpart in China, when trouble first broke out in 1925, dismissed the theory that Russian influence was responsible for it on the simple plea that Communism was a political creed repugnant to the Chinese.

Communist China—a Danger to India. Attention must here be drawn to the conclusions which a former Director of this Bureau drew from a lengthy first-hand study of the early stages of the Chinese revolution. The following instructive passage, taken from pages 253-4 of Sir David Petrie's book (a short description of which is given in Chapter 4) speaks for itself: "For the time being, Communism appears to have received a definite set-back, but it may again be taken at any time, as an ally, to the bosom of one or other of the warring parties. It emerges too that even Chiang-Kai-Shek and the anti-Communist influences he represents do not apparently dislike other foreign powers the less because they hate Russia the more. Thus it would seem unwise to count with any certainty on the set-back to Bolshevism being anything more than a temporary one. At any rate, it is safe to assume that for so far

ahead as anyone can see, there will be no strong, impartial Central Government in Peking or elsewhere, and there will be no settled and efficient administration in the Provinces. In such a soil every foul weed is bound to take root, and Bolshevism will probably continue to flourish either because of the active encouragement it will receive, or because of the total absence of resistance it will encounter. Similarly, the Indian revolutionary element will find a footing in a disordered China, and the *Ghadr* plotter and the Soviet emissary will join forces and endeavour each to exploit the other to his own advantage. The combination is an awkward enough one, and it demands that we should continue to observe it with a jealous and watchful eye, at least so long as it is in vigorous existence in a country so contiguous to our borders as is China."

Communism in Being. If there are still any left in India who, after the disorders of 1927 and 1928, are inclined to make light of the dangers of allowing Moscow to work her will unimpeded, it is necessary only to refer them to the bitter lessons which present-day China, more than all of the nations of the East, has to teach. Although Communism in China, as, too, in India, was originally an exotic growth, the seeds being sown and the first-shoots nourished by foreign agencies, it is no longer correct to assume that Moscow exercises direct control over the Chinese Communist Party. The days when Russian advisers were members of the central executive committee and when Russian officers were attached to Chinese units in the field ended with the expulsion of the Borodin Mission in 1927. The red armies and the new central Soviet Government of China set up in December 1931 are almost entirely, if not wholly, staffed and manned by Chinese, many of whom have received their political or military training in Soviet schools and universities. Papers seized from Hilaire Noulens in June 1931 proved that 172 such students returned to China between September 1930 and April 1931. It will give some idea of the formidable proportions of this educative scheme to say that the Tashkent School alone provides a two or three years' course to some 2,000 students of between thirty and forty

different nationalities, who return to their homes to train others, to spread propaganda, and to wait and work for the day of deliverance from "capitalist oppression".

The Central Soviet Government. Inefficient and ill-equipped though the Central Soviet Government of China may be, its auxiliaries, the red armies, have established (in default of serious offensive operations against them by the recognised Government of the day) effective control over a large belt of territory which, roughly, comprises three of the central provinces. By very force of example, if for no other reason, the sphere of its influence was slowly spreading outwards towards Hankow, Amoy, and Foochow when Chiang-Kai-Shek very recently began his so-called "bandit suppression campaign"—the name itself being a tacit refusal to look facts in the face. It can only be said at the present moment that if Chiang-Kai-Shek fails in his object, the Communist menace may well assume such proportions that the whole of the trade of central China will be seriously interrupted, and the Yangtse as a main artery of water-borne trade be likewise affected.

Local Adaptations. With the consolidation of the Communist position in any particular area, there has been built up in the course of time, first in the villages, later in the townships, and finally in the districts, centres of Soviet authority, all of which are now directly controlled by the Central Soviet Government of China. Draft "bills" have been drawn up and passed into law by the district and provincial Congresses of the Chinese Soviets. All these "laws" have borne the extravagant impress of Russian influence and advice, but, with a few exceptions, they have remained on paper, more as a programme setting forth an ideal conception which must be kept before the masses than as something to which practical application can be given. The exceptions referred to are those which provide for the confiscation of all land without compensation and its division, under the supervision of the Soviets, amongst the "toiling peasantry" and the soldiers of the red armies. The confiscation of the property of the more wealthy landowners is to be accompanied by the cancel-

lation of all verbal or written feudal and usurious agreements. There is evidence that these "laws" are actually being enforced in some areas.

Thus have those responsible for the direction of Communist policy sought to bring into being a modified form of Soviet State adapted to local conditions and to the special circumstances of the case, and have thereby furnished to those who read the signs aright an amazing example of the working of their many-sided policy. The state launched, indigenous oarsmen must propel it. Russian academies are still at the disposal of those who wish to avail themselves of the fare provided there, but apart from this and from small irregular subsidies and periodical tours of inspection by eminent Communists, no other assistance is now forthcoming. Another autonomous Soviet State in the making has been added to the U.S.S.R.

Earlier Methods. That the approach to the millenium is by paths of untold suffering is a matter of small account, for the true Communist stifles present discomfort with thoughts of future bliss. To those sufferers to whom Communism is an imposition rather than a faith, however, such resignation is impossible, and it is probably amongst this class of person that the red armies are most generally confounded with bandits pure and simple. For this there are good reasons. In the early days, in 1925, the very existence of these armies, openly carrying the device of the hammer and sickle, depended in a large measure on their using the one weapon with which authority within, and, indeed, the whole fabric of, the U.S.S.R. is maintained, namely, terror. The record of the red armies from the moment they began operations will not bear minute inspection. Pillage, rapine, and the destruction of homes and crops, in fact the whole range of human beastliness was indulged in in open and ordered method; not for the immediate material benefit of the perpetrators (though it would be absurd to suggest that such a motive was completely absent), but with the ultimate object of reducing the countryside to a waste and the people to a state of abject terror in order to force them into the ranks of the red armies, where alone stomachs were filled and safety could be found.

Apostles of Communism. At a later stage, it is true, new methods were in evidence, but this can hardly be said to condone the early savagery described above. When the Communists continued their northern advance in 1926, the military forces were preceded by groups of highly trained Communist agents whose duty it was to prepare the population in the towns and villages on the line of march for the advent of the troops, and to inculcate in them some degree of appreciation of the doctrines of Communism. With the onward march of the troops, the representatives of this political organisation remained, scattered throughout the villages and townships on the line of march, laying by quiet but very thorough propaganda, the foundations of those forces which are now known as the red armies and of that organisation which styles itself the Central Soviet Government of China.

Application to India. Much more could be written of the events which led up to the present position, but enough has, I think, been said to show to what lengths Communism neglected can go. It may still be argued that India is not China. To this the reply would seem to be that it is certainly not beyond the realm of possibility that the India of to-morrow, surrounded, as well she may be, by hostile spheres of Communist influence, may have her times of stress no less severe than those of the China of to-day. More specifically, it is relevant to inquire what the position in Burma would have been if the troops dispatched to quell the recent rebellion there had been required to deal with trouble engineered by Moscow's agents on India's Persian and Afghan borders, or elsewhere. And, finally, emphasis must be laid on the fact that the whole teaching of Communist history is that Moscow will choose the time of greatest stress to play her cards. With a flourishing organisation already in being in the country chosen for action, the achievement of her sinister objective will be simple; her efforts in a country, where the authorities have been forearmed with accurate information, have not neglected the signs, have armed themselves with sufficient powers, and have used them as occasion demanded, will be comparatively harmless.

CHAPTER 3.

THE RÔLE OF THE SOVIET TRADER.

Mongolia, a Soviet State. In order to secure a proper appreciation of one of the real dangers of Communism it is necessary to examine material likely to throw light on the Soviet economic policy. This can, perhaps, best be done by giving a brief example, and I have selected for this purpose a recent official report on conditions in Mongolia, not because it is the only one available, but because it presents, in a concise and readable form, a typical picture of the results which attend the working out of Moscow's designs in the East: "The control acquired by Soviet Russia over all Mongolian activities during the last few years can be vividly pictured from recent trade returns. Briefly, the entire trade channels of the country have been changed. Formerly these were to and from China across the eastern and southern frontiers. Now they run across the northern and western districts to Russia despite the wild and mountainous nature of the country to be traversed.

"Five years ago the trade of Mongolia with China proper represented sixty-five per cent. of the total, while that with Russia was thirty-five per cent. Two years later, the positions had been reversed, and the process has been continued until, at the present time, tea is the only Chinese import while Mongolian exports to China have virtually ceased.

"This elimination of Chinese, and fostering of Russian trade has been achieved by the handing over of the entire import and export trade of Mongolia to government organisations backed by Russian capital. The best known of these is the Mongolian Central Co-operative Society. In 1924, twenty-three per cent. of the finished products of trade handled by this society came from Russia, seventy per cent. from other foreign countries. Six years later, the position had been more than reversed. The figures for the trade in raw materials are even more striking. In 1924, of all raw materials in Mongolia, six

per cent were used in the country, twenty-five per cent went to Russia, while sixty-nine per cent were accounted for by foreign countries. In recent years the proportion used in Mongolia had risen to nine per cent, while the balance of ninety-one per cent went to Russia, and the foreign trade was entirely dominated.

“To aid these new movements of trade, which was formerly carried on the backs of horse, coolie, or camel, or by boat along the Yangtse river, the Soviet Government has established a system of transportation by motor-truck over roads connecting with the trans-Siberian Railway.

“On the frame-work of their political and military control of the country, the Russians have thus fastened an economic stranglehold which has effectively cut off Mongolia from its old dependence on China and made it an integral part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.”

Soviet Flag Follows Soviet Trade. There are several other Asiatic countries of which much the same could have been written. Soviet dumping and competition have caused serious losses to the Turkish tobacco and cement industries. With the lapse of the contract previously held by the Egyptian Shell Company, Moscow has secured the important petrol and oil market of Saudi Arabia. Her trade agencies established in recent years in Yemen have given her a footing in the area which it serves. Russian sugar, piece-goods and timber made their appearance in Iraq in fairly large quantities towards the end of 1930, since when this trade has expanded considerably until the first Soviet Trade Mission arrived in Baghdad, after much negotiation, in January 1932. The Trade Monopoly Law, which was introduced in 1931 in order to restrict the import of Russian goods into Persia, proved far from effective, and retaliatory measures, which the Soviet Government adopted, wrung from the Persians a very favourable commercial treaty which has entirely subjected the Persian Government, commercially, to the will of the Soviet. Russian trade, conducted through the medium of Afghan merchants, has captured the market for foreign goods in the northern provinces of Afghanistan, and though all other attempts on the part

of the Soviet to extend the field of its trading operations have so far been firmly resisted by King Nadir Shah's Government, yet those efforts are still vigorously prosecuted by means both of open negotiations and secret machinations. In Sinkiang, as in Persia, Moscow has appropriated a large portion of the foreign trade, mainly that in piece-goods of the cheaper qualities, paints and colours, and cigarettes, and Soviet influence has correspondingly increased. Much, if not all, of this expansion of Russian trade has been made at the expense of British firms. With it there has come, as a logical consequence, a steady increase of Soviet influence in the areas affected and the maxim "Flag follows Trade" on which Moscow's propagandists affect to pour such scorn, is more than applicable to Moscow's own commercial policy. Nowhere are Russian traders popular; there are bitter complaints of their business methods, which have undoubtedly been highly questionable and have ruined many indigenous merchants; but when the Soviet has obtained an economic stranglehold such as it has in Persia, in Sinkiang and in Mongolia, and such as it is attempting to obtain in Afghanistan, China and a dozen other eastern countries, mere formal protests are of no avail and the country in question must either offer open resistance, with all its risks, or go the way that Mongolia has gone.

The Five-Year Plan. An intensification of the policy illustrated above was made necessary early in 1931 owing to the need for drastic economy in the use of foreign currency. The working of the Five-Year Plan had not come up to expectations and the economic blight which left no country in the world unscathed had embarrassed the Soviet Government no less than those of other nations. The collateral Five-Year Plan for the Comintern, the consummation of which was fixed for the year 1933, had, nevertheless, to proceed. For those who wish to see it, a working summary of this Communist plan is printed as an appendix, but it is necessary to state here that the Twelfth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, held in Moscow in 1932, made it clear to all and sundry that "precisely because little time remains before the revolutionary crisis matures,

it is necessary, without losing a moment, to *intensify and accelerate our Bolshevist mass work*, to win over the majority of the working class, and to heighten the revolutionary activity of the working class". "The successful accomplishment of this task", the thesis continued, "demands that every Communist Party shall establish, extend, and strengthen permanent and *intimate* contacts with the majority of workers, wherever workers may be found. While, therefore, a severe cut was made in the actual amounts allotted for Communist work all over the world, simultaneous efforts were made to increase the output of Russian goods to the countries in which the Comintern Plan was in operation, and particularly in China."

European Analogies—American Investigation of Soviet Trade. Thus is the history of Amtorg and of Arcos being repeated in the East. A special committee created by the American House of Representatives in May 1930 to investigate the activities and propaganda of the Communists in the United States reached the following conclusions in regard to the former organisation:—"Both the present Chairman of the Board and the business manager of Amtorg were not only Communists, but revolutionists. They now say they are not Communists. Peter A. Bogdanov, the Chairman, began his career as a Communist when only eighteen years of age and thereafter held numerous high official posts in both the Soviet Government and the Russian Communist Party; Feodar M. Ziavkin, the business manager, was for several years chief of the O.G.P.U. in Don and showed by his evidence before the Committee that "he knew but little of the business affairs of Amtorg and was not fitted or competent to handle large business matters". (All Bogdanov's four predecessors had been highly placed Russian Communists.) "A man" (to continue the interrupted quotation) "does not ordinarily cease to be a Communist, and become a non-Communist, simply by saying so. These high officials hold their present positions as political appointments. They represent the Russian Government control, and they are dictated to by Communists. Only by word of mouth have they ceased to be Communists. They were called upon

to renounce Communism that they might enter the United States. In every question relating to Communism, where evasion could be had, they have availed themselves of it, but there was one test—the oath. Both refused to take the oath. They remained loyal to the Communistic basic principle—atheism—in a disbelief of and a hatred for the Supreme Being; they still adhere to the first principle of Communism”. These conclusions, it may be added, were reached in spite of the fact that “it was their purpose to keep from this Committee the evidence which might be damaging to Amtorg” and that, to that end, “officials of that corporation were not frank and candid in answering questions, but were evasive and argumentative, and evidently sought to cover up rather than disclose facts”. Indeed, the record discloses the fact that, when Amtorg officials knew that its affairs were to be investigated, a conference was called to outline the evidence to be offered, at which statements were prepared for the various officials to swear to. One man, a vice-president, resigned on this issue as he “did not wish to participate in perjury, as was done by Mr. Bogdanov and the others”.

Arcos. Proof of the complicity of the All-Russian Co-operative Society (Arcos) in the Communist movement in Great Britain is not far to seek. A sufficiently convincing passage is to be found at page 117 of the printed judgment delivered by the Additional Sessions Judge, Meerut, on the 16th January 1933 in the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case. In that section which discusses the evidence against the Labour Research Department (which page 671 of the same judgment shows was a party to the conspiracy) Mr. Yorke uses the following words:—

“Then again in the defence in this case Spratt, accused, himself has supplied a most valuable piece of evidence in regard to the associations of the L.R.D. in 1921-22. This was the annual report for that year. This report contains two Cash Accounts, No. 1 and No. 2. In No. 1, we find the income for the year is about £3,300, of which £892 is from fees for work done. The largest fee is £425 from the All-Russian Co-operative Society, better known as Arcos. In Cash Account No. 2, we find

receipts from Arcos of £3,308 which is all expended in salaries, rents and rates, office furniture, stationery, type-writing, publications, binding, stamps, telegrams, special fee to L.R.D., etc. The item under salaries is £1,750, whereas the item under salaries in the General Cash Account No. 1 is only £1,145. These figures suggest that for the bulk of its work in 1921-22 the Department was a kind of agency for Arcos. The only explanation in this report is at page 8, where the report, which is signed by the Executive Committee and by the Secretary, R. Page Arnot, contains the following passage: 'A further heavy piece of work has been the preparation of the bulletin of statistical and other information for the All-Russian Co-operative Society. The arrangement made (which was approved at the last Annual General Meeting) has entailed a good deal of extra research, but the effect of this action on our activities has been stimulating, and we have good reason to be satisfied with this particular piece of work. We are glad to be able to say that the information and statistics thus compiled are all available for the Labour Movement and will be published from time to time in one form or another, but chiefly in the studies of capital and labour which we deal with hereafter.' "

This, in itself, may be considered very little by way of proof, but lower down on the same page the Judge returns to the attack, and in doing so, merely confirms the considered view of the British authorities who removed this centre of Communist intrigue from London in the year 1926. "In the words of the Crown Counsel", he has written, "the prosecution case is that 'this ostensibly respectable statistic-compiling organisation was used by the live wires on its Executive and among its office-bearers and others to further their aims and the aims of the C.P.G.B. and the Communist International'. I have already shown that there is considerable ground for concluding that this theory is correct, and this close relation with Arcos is another point in favour of the theory, and a point which should not be underestimated in the light of the correspondence between C. P. Dutt and A. Inkpin, General Secretary of the C.P.G.B., recovered at the search of the C.P.G.B. office in October

1925. This correspondence consists of two letters. In the former, the General Secretary of the Org. Bureau objects to a certain arrangement about work made between C. P. Dutt and R. Page Arnot. In the latter, C. P. Dutt expresses annoyance at the charge and says: 'I was not aware that any arrangement in a loose and irregular fashion was made with me by Comrade Arnot, as I received my instructions to make the temporary change of occupation from the proper authorities of both Arcos and the Delegation,' (by which I assume he means the Soviet Delegation) so that we have in this letter Arcos and the Soviet Delegation closely associated with the C.P.G.B."

How close the connection was may be gathered from the widespread alarm which the raid on the premises of Arcos caused and the flood of condemnation which it provoked in Communist circles throughout Great Britain. Many of the speakers at the frequent meetings which followed the searches asserted that any documents said to have been found would undoubtedly be forgeries, and a north-country district organiser, to quote one example, urged in his secret instructions the need for the greatest precaution in keeping records and handling correspondence, and added, "Particularly is this the case when we take into consideration the raids upon Arcos Ltd."

The C.P.G.B., a Proven Tool of Moscow. It only remains to add that no fewer than thirteen pages of the judgment (48-61) are devoted to a discussion of the part which the Communist Party of Great Britain played in the Meerut case, and, as the judge has remarked in another part, "the subject of the C.P.G.B. leads straight on to the general history of the conspiracy and the evidence in regard to it".

The Russian Trade Delegation. That the Russian Trade Delegation itself was not above suspicion is shown by the following facts. In July 1921, it was reported that the Soviet had granted to Zinoviev five million gold roubles for propaganda in India and the East, and that, of the four millions actually handed over to him, 1,200,000 (£120,000) had been sent to Afghanistan, apparently destined for India. Investigation

showed that in June of the same year, the Bank of England paid out to the Russian Trade Delegation in London four hundred Bank of England notes of £100 each. Of these, sixty-six were found to have been cashed in India in and after June 1922, all of them having reached India *viâ* Afghanistan. Of the sixty-six, fifty-three were ascertained to have been received in the ordinary course of trade; but of the remainder, six were paid to one Mota Singh, a noted *Babbar Akali* leader, five to Ghulam Hussain, a well-known and prominent member of the *Ghadr*-Communist group in Kabul, and two to relatives in India of Indian revolutionaries in Kabul. After his arrest in 1923, Ghulam Hussain confessed that he had received from Kabul two sums in English notes of about Rs. 9,000 and Rs. 6,000, which he knew was Bolshevik money.

CHAPTER 4.

A PRELIMINARY APPRECIATION.

Independent India a Likely Victim. Before I enter upon the narrative proper, there is yet another preliminary task to be performed—namely, to give some indication of the dangers which the success of Communist efforts is likely to entail in an independent India of the future. It may be argued that the proper place for such an appreciation is the end rather than the beginning, but I am convinced that it finds a fitter place amongst the introductory chapters, partly because the nature of authority which I propose to harness to my service would seem to demand it, and partly because it is my hope that an early understanding of something that Communism implies for India will make more readable and intelligible the chapters that are to follow. When the story is done, I will add my own few comments to those which I reproduce below.

Sir David Petrie's Book. Towards the close of 1927, there was produced under the direction of Mr. (now Sir David) Petrie, the then Director of the Intelligence Bureau, a volume entitled *Communism in India, 1924-27*, which, as its name implied, brought up to the end of 1927 the history of events which an earlier work by Sir Cecil Kaye had left at the conclusion of the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case. I make no apologies for the use to which I shall later put Sir David Petrie's valuable contribution to the history of India; indeed, it would be but a poor compliment to the labours of this officer to make no use at all of an authoritative work which deals with a subject so closely akin to my own.

The Dangers of Success. Sir David Petrie's appreciation of the situation as it was just prior to the dark days of 1928 seems so exactly to fit the trend of events as they are to-day that I cannot do better than quote at some considerable length from the concluding pages of his book. The Meerut prisoners have been and gone; the star of Communism has risen and waned; and,

so at least it seems to me, we are now entering upon a third cycle wherein Communist emissaries, wiser by the experience of their comrades of yesterday, will work in India with sharper tools and greater circumspection. Moscow's schools and academies are working at full pressure; the encircling of India has begun and 'contacts' are being made from all sides; another Communist 'drive', more serious than that of 1928, is clearly in the offing to be pushed home whenever the opportunity presents itself:—

“ . . . What the Soviet desires is not the conversion of India to the Communist creed (for it expressly recognises that in Eastern countries the nationalist spirit must be stimulated and played upon) ”, so wrote Sir David Petrie, “ but such a general upheaval, such a widespread outbreak of disorder as will render a continuance of our rule impossible. Now in non-co-operation we have had a clear illustration of a state of affairs after Russia's own heart, an upheaval which, even without outside direction or assistance, shook our authority as it has seldom been shaken. It may frankly be admitted that the combination of circumstances that favoured the birth of non-co-operation was altogether exceptional—war-weariness and economic pressure, apprehension and unsettlement in the minds of Indian Muslims, the bitter memories of the Punjab disturbances of 1919, and finally a leader in the person of Gandhi, whose appeal to the mass mind was semi-divine, and whose influence was far more religious than political. But if the hour and the man are not again likely to arrive together, there may yet be movements of a serious enough character, even though they fall short of the country-wide scale of that inaugurated by Gandhi. The Punjab disturbances of 1919 were purely secular in their origin and owed much to the activities of the propagandist and the agitator; had they occurred at a time when our hands were already full on the North-West Frontier, or in other directions, their suppression might have been far more difficult and their challenge to Government's ability to prosecute a war incalculably more serious. The Malabar rebellion was also provoked by political mischief-mongers, and it might have taken far longer

to smother had Government been heavily pre-occupied in other directions. Both these outbreaks were strictly indigenous in their origin, and they were supported neither by foreign direction nor by foreign money. But such isolation is not to be looked for in future, and the stimulation of disorders by means of trained propagandists and liberal financial support are among the more obvious and elementary factors that will have to be reckoned with. What is more, Russia has now spread her net of intrigue so wide that she could probably succeed in arranging that troubles outside our borders should synchronise with any serious outbreak within them. At least her position of influence in places like Afghanistan, Central Asia and China suggests disquieting possibilities in this direction. If ever India were to be seriously denuded of troops at a time when there was internal trouble on any widespread scale, the extent to which the situation might be exploited by an efficient Communist organisation can readily be imagined. An Indian Communist's appreciation of the possibilities is as follows:—
“The time to start *satyagraha* will be when we are most organised, when the Government has made itself most unpopular, and when the political situation outside India has added to its distractions and increased its embarrassments; such a situation may arise any day.” The longer Communism can go on propagating the idea that by their own action the masses themselves can remove the British tyranny and every ill from which they suffer under it, the more formidable will be the conflagration it will set alight when the time comes to apply the match. I am asking no one to believe that Bolshevik Russia can achieve the supernatural (as was popularly believed of Germany), but I do, on the other hand, lay stress on the consideration that the ease with which popular feeling against the Government can be whipped up in this country, will ever tend to increase the odds in favour of Communism being able either to find its opportunity or to make it. The special danger to India arising out of the Bolshevik penetration of countries contiguous to her borders is well expressed in the following passage from a recently published article from the pen (probably) of an Indian Communist in Europe:

‘ However that may be, the question of immediate concern to the Indian Government is whether, if necessary by a recourse to armed force, it can eradicate the new centre of Bolshevik influence from which infectious Marxist doctrines may spread to India. If it were merely to stop the distribution of Bolshevik pamphlets and literature (some of which have perhaps been printed and forged by anti-Bolshevik agents in Europe), the task, though difficult, is by no means insurmountable. A rigorous censorship and close examination of foreign mails can for all effective purposes do the trick, but the real impossible task is to stop the spread of ideas which travel without vehicle and gain momentum from resisting force. The very existence of a pro-Bolshevik Afghan State will be the greatest sign-post of Bolshevism to the tribes of the North-Western Frontier Province, who will pass the message onwards to India.’

“ Extensive internal disorders, even though falling short of armed rebellion, may nevertheless create difficulties of a sufficiently formidable character. The dispersal of large hostile mobs is ever a matter of the utmost difficulty to the civil authorities, while to the military it is anathema. There can be no more disagreeable duty than the use of force against a rabble which can never stand a chance against well-disciplined and well-armed police or troops. It is equally true that there is nothing that alienates popular sympathy and kindles popular indignation so quickly as the shooting of the members of a mob (no matter how much they may have deserved it) by the armed forces of the State. The only remedy, therefore, which the Government has against a general mob-rising is the very one which is most likely to aggravate it, as recent events at Shanghai, Hankow and Canton will bear witness. The power of the infuriated rabble was well illustrated at Hankow, when the British were driven from their Concession, not by the armies of Canton but by hordes of yelling Chinese, drunk with anti-British hatred. Disturbances of Communistic origin, even if of lesser magnitude, can never be but the beginning of greater evil, for their suppression will, by exciting popular sympathy, inevitably shorten the time and pave the way to another and more

serious recurrence. To leave all question of active violence on one side, it needs few words to point out the mischief that Communism might do were it to obtain a proper grip over organised, or even unorganised, labour in this country. During a time of war (possibly of Moscow's making) the calling of a general or sectional strike among railway-workers, dockers, etc., might completely paralyse Government's ability to procure supplies and to keep open its lines of communication.

" A study of the dangers arising out of the spread of Communism in India inevitably suggests a consideration of the possible safeguards that can be adopted against it; but this latter is naturally a subject that cannot be usefully discussed in the open. There is, however, one general consideration I desire to advance; and, as it is a fairly obvious one, I can be giving but little away in putting it forward. It is this, that the amount of mischief Communism can do us in India will depend mainly on the response from within that is accorded to efforts from without. Outside assistance will undoubtedly be freely available in the shape of agents, propaganda, money and ideas. But none of these will avail, unless effective touch and co-operation can be established with those sections of the Indian populace—revolutionary societies or labour bodies—which are willing to make common cause with our enemies. That there will always be such possible points of contact is unquestionable, for the hatred of British rule which animates both will always serve to establish a certain identity of interest between the Indian extremist and the Bolshevik agent—predisposing the one to accept assistance and the other to render it. Of this contention the ease and celerity with which the Communists captured and united the native revolutionary elements in Java furnish a recent and striking illustration. Therefore, while the Government's watch on the indigenous forces of disorder must always be sufficiently vigilant to enable it to detect any new accretions of strength, its face must be rigidly set against the leaving unclosed of any loophole whatsoever by which the agents and doctrines of Communism might find admission to this country. It would be folly to despise the day of small things, for the germ is bound to

multiply, even as that of an infectious disease, and to taint the entire body politic. It would be as little justifiable for the Government to relax its vigilance in time of peace as it would be for our health authorities to discard precautions when the public health is at its best. Wherever Communism manifests itself, it should be met and stamped out like the plague. The spread of Communism in India is not one of those problems which may be looked at from a particular 'angle of vision'; it must be looked straight in the face, and it must be fought with the most unrelenting opposition."

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PART TWO.

India's Neighbours.

CHAPTER 5.

PERSIA.

Agabekov's Revelations. Moscow's aims and achievements in Persia and particularly in Eastern Persia have been detailed at great length by Georgi Agabekov, the apostate O.G.P.U. (United States Political Department) agent who held many very important posts in those parts, and to the general accuracy of whose testimony on the subject the police of five countries have certified. Georgi Agabekov made a very full statement to the French police in July 1930 and has subsequently written several books and articles dealing with his activities as head of the Bolshevik secret service in the Near and Middle East. It is not within the scope of a work of this nature to give long extracts from his writings. It will be sufficient to say that they reveal the fact that Moscow has, since 1926, attempted to secure a foothold in Persia through its Consular officers and its trade agencies (of which there are about thirty), and has managed to obtain considerable influence over the Persian Government itself.

Communist Activity. Through these channels, and also, to a small extent, through Russian clubs and schools, Communist propaganda has spread throughout Persia during the past ten or twelve years, and has resulted, in several instances, in agrarian or industrial unrest which can almost invariably be traced to one or other of the various media employed. Thus, trouble amongst the employees of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in 1929 followed closely on the establishment of a new Soviet Consulate at Mohammerah; and a year or so later, the Bakhtiarian landlords experienced considerable difficulty with their tenants in a locality where the Soviet Government had recently opened a branch of their oil-selling agency. For some years the Persian Government strove to combat what they rightly diagnosed as a threat to their very existence, but their action has always been strictly limited by fear of commercial reprisals; and as

Russia's economic stranglehold grew tighter year by year, and as more and more of Persia's highest officials became entangled financially in the Russian net, so did the efforts of the Persian Government lose more and more of their vigour and continuity. A vigorous sweep of the broom, such as many in Persia would wish to see, might provoke reactions of an inconvenient nature. A few obvious duties have, it is true, been forced upon an unwilling Government—the prevalence of Communist teaching in Soviet schools caused the peremptory closing of all foreign primary institutions throughout the country, and the recent discovery that the Communist intelligence organisation had paid agents in nearly every Government office and was subsidizing operators in the telegraph office and bribing postal officials was necessarily followed by a large number of arrests and prosecutions. But the fountain-head—the consulates and the trade agencies—still remain untouched; and, as has been said in an earlier chapter, Russian threats of retaliation delayed for some considerable time the enforcement of the Trade Monopoly Law, of the provisions of which full advantage was never taken, at any rate where Russia was concerned.

Present Methods. Although, therefore, the schemes of the Communist International (as distinct, if this is possible, from the Soviet Government) made comparatively little progress up till 1931, except in Azerbaijan, where Communist doctrines are so highly developed that Moscow can absorb it almost whenever she wishes to do so, yet the economic depression which that year brought with it presented fresh opportunities for subversive propaganda in the rest of Persia of which the Comintern took full and immediate advantage. Widespread poverty and discontent have provided a fertile soil on which the seeds of Communist doctrines are being thickly sown to-day, and Persia is rapidly becoming, in the words of a competent observer, 'the centre of Soviet propaganda in the East', supplanting Afghanistan in this respect. There is a certain amount of documentary evidence in support of this contention, so far, at any rate, as India is concerned, and a part of it will be scrutinised at a later stage in this chapter. Every possible Russian agency

seems to have been harnessed to the task of spreading this Communist propaganda. Pseudo-refugees, school masters, traders of all races, officials of the Persian Government, and even a number of White Russians have been employed in various capacities.

O.G.P.U.'s Real Task. All this costs money, and there can be no doubt that this is provided by the many outposts of the U.S.S.R. within Persia itself. Agabekov went so far as to state that most, if not all, of the Soviet's so-called trade agencies are nothing more than branches of Moscow's very widespread intelligence organisation, and, although it is doubtful whether all the information gathered by underhand means materially reinforces the position of the Soviet Government *vis-à-vis* that of Persia, yet the part which this organisation has played, and is playing, in the furtherance of Moscow's ultimate aims is by no means insignificant. O.G.P.U. agents perform a dual task. At first engaged solely to obtain information, they are employed, when the probationary period is past and when their mettle has been proved, to spread Communist ideas amongst the indigenous population in the intervals of, and under the cloak of, their ostensible and lawful avocations.

Anti-British Propaganda. Much of the Communist activity in Persia, however, is directed against Britain generally and British interests in Persia in particular. This will be the more evident when I say that Agabekov's instructions, when he first assumed control in 1926, were, *inter alia*, to 'prepare' the Kurds on account of the strategic position which they would occupy 'in the future conflict between England and Russia', and to stir up the Bakhtiarians so that they might harass the British rear and destroy the Anglo-Persian oilfields 'in the event of an attack by the Imperialist powers on the U.S.S.R.'. In short, a large part of his plan of campaign was to be directed against British interests and towards the ousting of British influence. It has already been stated that Communist intrigue in Bakhtiari produced the desired result.

Indians in Persia. It has been known for some considerable time past that there existed in Persia a band

of disaffected Indian *Ghadr* Sikhs, some of whom were lorry drivers and others shop-keepers, who had been engaging in anti-British activities, but it was not till early in 1931 that it was realised that their activities were being organised and indirectly controlled by the Soviet authorities in Moscow and in Persia. Since then, it has been well established that this is the case and that a number of Indians in Kerman, Duzdap, and Kandahar are working as Communist agents for the dissemination of Communist literature and ideas. They are, moreover, in touch with some of the Soviet Consulates in Persia, which are anxious to establish connection with India through them, and have, of course, many associations with Russian Trade Agencies, many of which, in the light of what has been written above, must be accounted little more than branches of the O.G.P.U.

Some Specific Cases. In September 1931, following the return of Narain Singh (a member of the *Ghadr* Party of some ten years' standing) from a visit to Moscow, there was a general extension of *Ghadr* organisations into north-eastern Persia. 'Contacts' and 'cells' were established at Birjand and Nasyriyeh, Barfaroush, Zahedan (Duzdap), Meshed, Herat, and possibly also at Bunder Pahlevi, and there was every indication that Moscow's intention was to make Persia a base for intensified Bolshevik propagandist activities in India. That this intention still exists, and its existence is placed beyond doubt by a letter written by Rattan Singh from Germany to Gurmukh Singh in Kabul early in 1932. The writer described how the Comintern wanted him to work in Persia. He was to open channels of communication with India, as the Comintern did not wish the Soviet Embassies to be embarrassed by having to do this work, and had agreed to go to Persia provided satisfactory arrangements were made for him, such as the provision of means to open a shop and to purchase a motor-car. He said that the documents regarding Persia had been signed by him and two members of the Comintern. With him was to be associated Teja Singh Sutantar who was being brought from South America specially for the purpose. Rattan Singh went on to explain that it was necessary for the *Ghadr* Party to keep in touch with

Communist parties in all countries and to organise more thoroughly the peasants and labourers of India, for which funds would be forthcoming. The bulk of this letter, however, dealt with Gurmukh Singh's work in Kabul, and it can, therefore, be dealt with more fittingly in the next chapter.

Rattan Singh is still in Europe and Gurmukh Singh has very recently been arrested for deportation from Afghanistan, but the scheme of which Rattan Singh spoke is, nevertheless, being put into operation. Fully authenticated documents have recently been brought to light to show that the Eastern Branch of the Comintern, working, probably, through the Soviet Consulate-General in Meshed, is in close touch with the Indian *Ghadr* Party in Persia and, through them, with the Punjab equivalent—the *Kirti-Kisan Sabha*. 'Thousands of *chervantsi* (roubles)', one such document reads, 'are being sent to you by the first mail. Please convert them into *krans* and hand them over to No. 825 so that No. 920 may be able to go to India and distribute the money there.' Another of the series reveals the fact that No. 825 is Abnashi Singh, a resident of the Jhelum district, whose passport had been cancelled on account of his Communist activities even before the existence of this evidence against him was known. No. 920 is Dheni Singh, a broker of Peshawar. Another passage which is of some importance runs as follows:—'No. 920 arrived there (probably India). You need not worry about money; the money-making machine is with me and has been brought there. There is no longer any need to send money through you' (the addressee in this case is a Persian Jew in Meshed who, for five years prior to 1928, owned a carpet shop in Peshawar). 'I will send it to place 16' (Amritsar). . . . 'No. 24 wrote that he had not received at any time Rs. 20,000 at place No. 13' (Peshawar). 'Please tell No. 825 or No. 920 to send money to place 13 for No. 24. This should be done immediately.' It remains only to say that most of the documents referred to were written in Russian, and almost certainly from Soviet territory, by a Jew who is known to be in Soviet employ. The whole series made it very clear that the line of communication between Persia

and India ran through Afghanistan. This is, of course, no new thing in Communist organisation in the Near and Middle East. For page 83 of Sir David Petrie's book shows that, 'From their present organisation in Central Asia, with their advanced base at Tashkent, the Bolsheviks had discerned three main lines of penetration:—(1) the central line through Afghanistan; (2) the eastern line through Chinese Turkestan; (3) the western line through Persia'. Zinoviev's description of this channel has already been quoted in Chapter 2—'the well-trodden paths to India through Persia and Afghanistan'.

CHAPTER 6.

AFGHANISTAN.

Contact with Persia and India. The foregoing chapter has given more than a hint of the part which Communists in Afghanistan have played in the prosecution of the policy of the Eastern Branch of the Comintern. Its importance as a centre for Indo-Bolshevik intrigue caused Sir David Petrie to devote considerable space in *Communism in India, 1924-27*, to Afghanistan in general and to Kabul in particular.

Early Bolshevik Plans. After the failure of the big attempt to bring about a revolution in Germany at the end of 1923, Communist leaders turned their attention more closely than ever towards the East and began preparations for an intensive campaign, with a view, primarily, to overthrow "British Imperialism" in India and Afghanistan, and to establish a "new extensive Muslim state, which should liberate millions of Indians from under the foreign yoke" and should receive the official support and recognition of the Soviet Union with its headquarters in Moscow. The new "state" was described as "a united empire of Mussulman-India and Afghanistan", and on the 14th January 1924, the Politbureau instructed the Soviet representative in Kabul that these were the lines on which he must work. Notwithstanding financial stringency in 1923, due to pressing needs in the West, a sum of 1,000,000 gold roubles (£100,000) was assured by the Executive Committee of the Communist International for the immediate necessities of the "Near-Central Eastern Section" with its headquarters at Tashkent. Half of this amount was for use in India and on her borders. At this time, too, Chicherin in Moscow said that the weapon of Afghanistan and the menace to British India of the Eastern Soviet Republics would have to be used "with caution and at the proper time"; also, that while the Soviet Government would have to refrain from an openly provocative

policy, the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs would continue undeviatingly to carry out the mission entrusted to it of uniting the oppressed peoples of the East. Thenceforward there were notable signs of activity, at least in the way of the laying down of ambitious schemes, the dispatch of men and money, and the carrying on of propaganda.

Penetration of Afghanistan. In August 1924 the Executive Committee of the Communist International issued instructions to Tashkent that a new propaganda base for northern Afghanistan should be established at Mazar-i-Sharif and that 10,000 proclamations should be issued in the name of the League of Defence of the Independence of Afghanistan with the object of inciting Afghans to break with the British; and between February and October 1925 there was a steady increase in the number of Russians entering Afghanistan, ostensibly for commercial reasons, those then in Kabul numbering 52. Throughout this period Afghanistan was being insidiously penetrated under cover of the new Turkestan Republics, which were being used to create movements in favour of the incorporation in the Soviet Union of the racially allied elements across the border, a process which clearly aimed at the expansion of the sphere of Moscow's influence in the direction of India and at the elimination of Afghanistan.

Soviet Elation. That the Communists were much encouraged by the seeming success of their venture will be apparent from the following extract from an issue of the *International Press Correspondence* which appeared at the time and which furnishes an apt example of their propaganda: "The small country of Afghanistan heroically fighting for its independence and struggling desperately to rid itself of the remnants of mediæval feudalism, finds in the Union of Soviet Republics a trusty ally and a comrade who is prepared to defend it from the aggression of British Imperialism. The insurrection inspired and nourished by the 'Labour Government' and headed by Prince Kherim Khan, who is aiming at the throne of Afghanistan, is serving still more to unite the Afghan people

with the Union of Soviet Republics, which for many years has proved its sincere desire to help the people of Afghanistan to liberate themselves from the chains of feudalism and foreign intervention. The flight of the Red airmen, who, with the audacity of eagles, crossed the Hindu Kush into Afghanistan, serves as a symbol of the assistance which the victorious proletariat is prepared to lend the oppressed peoples of the East in their struggle against Imperialism. . . .

“ The innumerable millions of toilers of India have, since the October revolution, ceased to feel that they are alone in their fight against the British oppressors. They know that in the north a powerful force has sprung up and is ripening, a force capable of inspiring fear even in the heart of ‘ invincible ’ British Imperialism. The toilers of India know that the country of the Soviets is their one true and unselfish ally.”

Slanders Against Britain. This skilful piece of anti-British propaganda was followed, in December 1926, by secret instructions from the Eastern Department of the I.K.K.I. to Kabul which stressed the necessity for exposing alleged British designs on Afghanistan and British Imperialism generally: “ We instruct you immediately to organise an energetic campaign in all the districts against British Imperialism and their intrigues. It is essential that a convincing story should be widely circulated among the masses that in the State of Afghanistan a revolution is being prepared by British agents.”

India the Objective. There can be no doubt that Moscow regarded the penetration of Afghanistan as something that was likely to help forward their general policy in India and on her borders. The central idea behind it all seems to have been the sending out of trained agents, who would penetrate India, organise “ cells ” amongst labourers, soldiers, and the indigenous elements of disorder (there is evidence on record that Moscow attempted to suborn even the Indian National Congress which, in 1922, considered an offer by Indians in Kabul to form a Congress Committee there and to

raise a crore of rupees "from foreign sources"), and would thereafter work on approved Bolshevik lines. Some of their known plans read as fantastic and visionary in the highest degree, but others appeared to be practical enough. One, which definitely comes within the latter category, was drawn up for the Kabul "centre" in the autumn of 1925. A net-work of "cells" was to be set up in Central Afghanistan, Turkestan, Bokhara, and Persia. These were to serve as clearing-houses for the passage of arms, literature and agents to India and to forward correspondence from India to Kabul, Baku and Moscow. A number of skilled Communist workers, mainly of Central Asiatic or American origin, including specialists in the organisation of military "cells", propaganda, transport, communications and printing, were actually dispatched to these sub-agencies, and funds were allotted to facilitate the printing in Kabul of propaganda in the local and Indian vernaculars. A special effort was also made to overcome the difficulties experienced in sending agents into India, and in September 1925 a considerable sum of money was supplied to the Kabul centre for the purchase of Afghan passports for this purpose.

Early Failures. The vigilance of the authorities in grappling with Moscow's underhand methods was not without its effect, and a confession of failure was made at a meeting of the Eastern Control Commission of the I.K.K.I. in August 1926 when Osetrov said that "revolutionary and party work in the ordinary sense" were "out of place" in Afghanistan and that the main task was to bring as much political pressure as possible on the Afghan Government. Work in Afghanistan was, therefore, reduced to two main tasks—anti-British propaganda and agitation in favour of a *rapprochement* with the Soviet Union. Appreciating the position in 1927, Sir David Petrie wrote at page 194 of his book: "That the Russians have spared no pains to launch ambitious plans in Afghanistan in furtherance of their schemes, which are primarily directed against India, may be accepted as beyond doubt; but that the results have been commensurate with the efforts made and the expenditure

incurred is far less certain". But so long as Amanullah remained on the throne Soviet influence remained predominant in Afghanistan.

The Fall of Amanullah. Such influence and prestige as Moscow had obtained during Amanullah's régime (and, with all her failures, it was by no means inconsiderable) disappeared in the chaos which followed his downfall. Her position was in no way improved by the violation on two different occasions, in 1929 and 1930, of the Afghan frontier by Soviet troops.

The Accession of Nadir Shah. Unlike his predecessor, King Nadir Shah took a serious view of Communist intrigue within his State, whether directed against Britain or himself. The Soviet Embassy at Kabul and the Consulates at Mazar, Maimana and Herat were re-established in 1930, however, and the air service, inaugurated in 1927 between Kabul and Termez, continued till its five years' term of contract ended, since when the Afghan Government has refused to renew it. Russian trade has captured the markets for foreign goods in the northern provinces, but all attempts on the part of the Soviet authorities to conclude a Trade Agreement and obtain certain monopolies covering the whole of Afghanistan have been firmly resisted, and Moscow's efforts to recover her former position of predominance has met with but little success.

Leonide N. Stark. But the present Soviet Minister at Kabul is the same L. N. Stark (and his Counsellor is the same Colonel Rix) whose financial relations in 1925 with Mullah Bashir—the proclaimed offender who played so great a part in the establishment of the colonies of Hindustani fanatics at Asma and Chamarkand—were discussed at pages 192 and 193 of Sir David Petrie's book. It was hardly likely that men so skilled in Afghan affairs, and men, moreover, who had been in great measure responsible for the direction of Moscow's earlier efforts, would rest content with the little that they were at first able to achieve. Their attempts to regain their former power, therefore, took two lines.

Propaganda in Favour of Amanullah.

There can be no doubt that Stark's masters, in Moscow would welcome any change from the present régime and there are ample grounds for supposing that one direction in which the Soviet Embassy and its Consulates are working is towards fostering any movement which aims at the subversion of Nadir Shah and his Government. There is evidence, on the one hand, to show that the adherents of the late king, scattered all over Afghanistan and the **Hejaz**, are being cherished by Stark, and, on the other, to prove that Colonel Rix has himself been in touch with seditious Indians from tribal territory, where schemes to subvert constituted authority are always welcome. It has also been reported that a landing ground is being sought in tribal territory, whereto, it is suggested, Amanullah himself can be brought by aeroplane. Of the recent expenditure of Russian funds amongst the tribesmen there can be no doubt, and were Amanullah suddenly to appear in their midst on the borders of Afghanistan, the result might well be a precipitate rising in his favour. In June 1932, a German newspaper alleged, on what it said was good authority, that Amanullah, in Italy, was engaged in writing his autobiography which was eventually to be published at the expense of the Soviet. The circulation of such a work in Afghanistan, if it can conceal Soviet assistance, might well have the result which Moscow very evidently desires, and the fact that, during his recent pilgrimage to Mecca, Amanullah consorted with the usual group of Communists who foregather there each year, lends considerable support to the view that he is a party to the plot to replace him on his throne at whatever the cost to Afghanistan. Another straw which points in the same direction is an interesting statement in Rattan Singh's recent letter to Gurmukh Singh, which is mentioned elsewhere, to the effect that he would shortly pay a visit to Mahmud Tarzi, the ex-king's father-in-law, in Germany. There were later indications that Rattan Singh actually met Amanullah in Venice at about the same time.

The Continuance of Indian Sedition. The other line which Stark and Rix took was to gather

around them the remnants of those Indian anti-British elements which abounded in Kabul during Amanullah's reign. Organisations such as the Hindustani Fanatics' Colony and the Indian National Club were amongst the few things that came through the 1929 revolution unimpaired. The temporary disappearance of foreign control and the still more important absence of Communist money rendered them largely innocuous from the British Indian point of view, but the welding of the old coterie into a new and active body was a matter of no great difficulty to a man of Stark's capacity. Mulla Bashir, Mir Rahmatullah Humayun, Gurmukh Singh, to mention only a few of the score of names which figure in Sir David Petrie's book, were all ready to resume their old relations with the Soviet Legation and readier still to accept Communist money.

Gurmukh Singh and Rattan Singh. Those already in Kabul when the Soviet Embassy re-opened there were joined at a later date by the notorious Rattan Singh *alias* Santa Singh *alias* Isher Singh. Rattan Singh emigrated to the Fiji Islands in 1914 and went thence to Vancouver, where he joined the American *Ghadr* Party in 1920. He quickly assumed a position of considerable prominence in Sikh circles in America and soon showed himself to be a dangerous member of the party. He visited Moscow in 1923, from where he was sent in company with Santokh Singh on a Communist mission to India. The part which he played in the general Sikh conspiracy against India is a subject which must be left for treatment in Chapter 21. But the recent activities of this desperado and of Gurmukh Singh, another dangerous and prominent member of the *Ghadr* Party, who broke jail in India and escaped to Afghanistan in 1923, as the leaders of the remnants of the *Ghadr* Party in Kabul, can, I think, more fittingly be disposed of here.

Sikh Schemes. A considerable volume of independent evidence accumulated during 1930 to prove that this knot of half-terrorist, half-Communist Sikhs in Kabul were in close and constant touch with the *Ghadr* headquarters in San Francisco on the one side and with

disaffected Indians at the Communist headquarters in Moscow on the other. A steady stream of correspondence between Afghanistan and these two places, and thence onwards to Sikhs in the Punjab as well, showed that the Kabul centre had regained much of its former importance as a base for subversive propaganda in India, and told of several active plans, the chief of which was to purchase and import a considerable quantity of arms, comprising both machine-guns and hand grenades, from America into Kabul on behalf of the Afghan Government. The ultimate idea, as it was revealed by the correspondence in question, was that a certain residuum of these arms would be smuggled into India, where they would be devoted to the purposes of the *Ghadr* Party. There was no question whatsoever of the genuineness of this information, and it was only by the most intricate and difficult diplomatic processes that it was possible to prevent its being put into operation. It should be mentioned that this was but one of a large variety of schemes which were brought to light and not all of which were so successfully frustrated.

The Communist Motif. Although the sources from which a good deal of the information on the subject comes have tended to emphasize (and rightly so, to my mind) the Communist complexion of the activities of the Sikh Party in Kabul, yet it would be as well not to lose sight of the firm bonds that tie this party to the *Ghadr* Party of America, the completeness of whose allegiance to Moscow varies in proportion to the state of its finances at a given time. This alone is sufficient to brand the members of the Kabul Party as terrorists—and terrorists of a violent type at that. As a matter of fact, the Sikh Communist is hardly to be distinguished from the Sikh revolutionary so far as his attitude towards violence is concerned; for the one is just as ready to resort to it as the other. The numerous visits which Gurmukh Singh and others of his ilk are known to have paid to the Soviet Embassy in recent years and their clandestine visits to both Stark and Rix only confirm the convincing documentary evidence already alluded to that the hand and purse of Moscow are behind

Sikh plotting in Afghanistan, independent and apart though the *Ghadr* Party may nominally be.

Rattan Singh's Letter. The recent letter from Rattan Singh to Gurmukh Singh, which was referred to in the previous chapter, gives a particularly clear insight into the workings of the Soviet Legation in Kabul, as, indeed, it does into many other aspects of the Comintern's intrigues, and I make no apology for dealing with it at some length. Writing from Berlin on the 20th March 1932, Rattan Singh warned Gurmukh Singh to be careful what he wrote in his letters as the Russians insisted on full translations, and it was unwise for him to criticise the Soviet Government; nor should the Russian officials in the Soviet Embassy in Kabul be the subject of any adverse remarks. He explained that the *Ghadr* Party's dealings were with the Comintern and not with the Soviet Government, and that it was the latter which controlled the Embassy. He added, however, that the *Ghadr* Party could let the Embassy know what persons in Kabul were likely to work against the party's interests and that the Embassy could then be left to deal with them. He said that the Comintern was well acquainted with affairs in Afghanistan and other places and that the Soviet were fully informed of British machinations in that country, but had no wish to start a war. He informed Gurmukh Singh that he had sent him one letter through the Soviet Embassy and another *viâ* India, but had not written more as Ishar Singh, *alias* Wasdev Singh (of whom more anon) was on his way to Kabul and would communicate many other things to him verbally. He had also sent some newspapers through Colonel Rix, the Counsellor.

Rattan Singh referred to the *Ghadr* Party's shortage of funds, and was particularly emphatic that it was necessary to remain on good terms with the Comintern, in spite of the fact that the latter had made promises which they had failed to honour. One particular reason why a continuance of friendly relations was so necessary was that he attached great importance to the arrival of young enthusiasts from the Argentine and elsewhere for training in Moscow's academies. They would, he

thought, be able to do very good propaganda work in India thereafter. Finally he mentioned the names of certain known Communist agents in Afghanistan who were "good men" but "had nothing to do with the *Ghadr* Party's work" and advised Gurmukh Singh of the dispatch of funds in the name of Rahmatullah Humayun. The remainder of the letter discussed Rattan Singh's proposed work in Persia and has already been dealt with in the appropriate place. It may be mentioned that the letter did not actually include all the names alluded to, but it has been possible, in every case, to determine with a considerable degree of accuracy the identity of each person mentioned in the somewhat cryptic language employed. Of the authenticity of the letter itself there is no doubt whatsoever.

Rattan Singh's Reappearance. I will now resume the narrative of events in Kabul at the point where I left it to discuss this most interesting documentary evidence of Communist complicity in anti-British schemes. The news of Stark's return to Afghanistan in 1930 and of the resumption of his former relations with anti-British elements there brought Rattan Singh from South America, where he was working at the time, to Berlin. Arriving there at the beginning of August 1930, he awaited definite instructions from San Francisco, but betrayed an anxiety to push on to Kabul as rapidly as possible. The success of the civil disobedience movement in that year, the general impetus which it gave to all Indian subversive movements both at home and abroad, and the serious trouble which began in Peshawar in April and spread in succeeding months to tribal territory as well, had convinced him, as, indeed, it had convinced many others of his way of thinking, that an opportunity had come too valuable to be lost. Every possible form of assistance must, therefore, immediately be given to the subversive elements on both sides of the Indian frontier in order to keep the British occupied on every front simultaneously.

Discussions in Moscow. Rattan Singh received his expected orders and left for Moscow at the end of October *en route* for Afghanistan. He spent the

whole of the month of November discussing the *Ghadr* Party's plans with the leaders of the Comintern and eventually arrived in Kabul on the 20th December 1930. As a result of his discussions he sent word to the leaders in California to cancel their proposal to send students to Italy for military training; such students should be sent to Moscow instead. This advice, was, as a matter of fact, at first resented in San Francisco as revealing the "dictatorial attitude" of the Comintern which was said to have "issued its orders through Rattan Singh". Rattan Singh also received instructions from the Comintern to infuse greater life into the *Ghadr* Party's propaganda in general, and, in particular, to take the line of denouncing Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru. He was interested to hear also that some Sikh students were shortly expected to arrive there from India, whether for military training or for the usual course in propaganda methods is not quite clear.

Operations in Kabul. Arrived in Kabul, he wrote, after consultation with Gurmukh Singh, a series of letters to San Francisco which showed that he was attempting to marshal all the anti-British elements for the ultimate attack on the Frontier. He asked that certain other important Sikh revolutionaries, whose names he mentioned, be sent to assist him, and there is some evidence, too, of his having established touch with Congressmen and *Khilafatists* in India and tribal territory. He certainly dispatched Gurmukh Singh and Wasdev Singh to India, where they attended the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Karachi in March 1931, and equally certainly he was able to send advice and instructions to the numerous Sikhs in the Punjab who returned from America during 1930 and 1931.

A Projected Rising. Somewhat vague information was received at the beginning of 1931 that plans were being developed by certain elements ill-disposed towards the British Government for an invasion of India from the North-West Frontier to take place simultaneously with widespread internal trouble, particularly in the Punjab. It was stated that the enemies of Britain

had placed a very large sum of money at the disposal of the notorious Haji of Turangzai, who, they believed, had a following large enough to attempt such an invasion. It was proposed that the internal rising should begin with the murder of Europeans, the cutting of telegraph wires, and the blowing up of railway bridges. It was also anticipated that this rising, which was timed to take place in March, would have the active support of Indian revolutionaries, disaffected returned emigrants, and dissatisfied ex-soldiers.

Reliability of Information. This information, received from a source whose veracity was doubtful, would hardly be worthy of consideration were it not for the fact that information was subsequently received on the same subject from sources of greater reliability. For example, there is the fact that an Indian, who was in close touch with Communist activities in Moscow, wrote in a letter, which he sent to England in November or December 1930, that mass terrorism had been arranged in India and also that further serious trouble would take place on the frontier in the following March or April. It is known too, that the Kabul branch of the *Ghadr* Party made persistent endeavours at about this time to secure large-scale maps of India and adjacent countries and plans of the frontier forts, as well as mobilization schemes and other items of military information regarding the North-West Frontier. Lastly, I need only mention that the gun-running scheme, to which I have made earlier reference, was due to mature at the beginning of 1931. All this may have been no more than a case of Moscow's wish being father to the thought, and it is, of course, recognised that *Ghadr* conspirators are always inclined to exaggerate their successes and potentialities. But, after making the necessary allowances, there still remains sufficient to justify the belief that, had not the authorities taken extraordinary precautions in India and on her frontiers, and had not many of the Sikh schemes referred to been nipped in the bud, India would have experienced serious trouble on her north-western frontier at a time when the terrorist movement was almost at its height, when the Congress was fresh from its self-styled

victory, the Irwin-Gandhi pact, when the *Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha* had shown itself to be in fighting mood, when Sikh agitation in the Punjab showed no signs of abating, and when, most important of all, the shadow of economic depression had but recently fallen on agricultural India.

Afghan Intervention. It was not, however, left to the British authorities alone to combat this menace. At a very early stage in the proceedings the Afghan Government recognised the dangers to its own well-being of the disturbance of the independent tribes. Rattan Singh had been warned while he was in Moscow that Nadir Shah's attitude was most unsatisfactory and that he might even be expelled from Afghan territory. This eventually proved to be the case and Rattan Singh left Kabul for Russia on the 2nd November 1931. His place was taken by Ishar Singh *alias* Wasdev Singh, a brother-in-law of the notorious Teja Singh Sutantar. Although Wasdev Singh was one of the chief conspirators in the Kabul of Amanullah's days, and was reported in 1926 to be employed by the Bolsheviki as a secret service agent, his assumption of charge after a period of training in Moscow has been accompanied by a decline rather than an increase in *Ghadr* activities in Afghanistan. In fact, since Rattan Singh's departure such schemes as have been devised have been on a much less grandiose scale than before, and the arrest of Gurmukh Singh in December 1932 gives rise to the hope that anti-British intrigue in Kabul will cease, at any rate for a time.

CHAPTER 7.

SINKIANG.

The Soviet Menace in Central Asia. East of Afghanistan there lies a little-known province of China, of which Urumchi is the capital. It is practically a dead-spot so far as the collection of information goes, but what little has been recorded (and some of the evidence is indisputable) reveals a highly unsatisfactory state of affairs, when it is remembered that one of the main trade routes between India and Central Asia traverses it and provides ample opportunities for the execution of Soviet designs and intrigues, and that, as an extract quoted in Chapter 5 has shown, the eastern line of Bolshevik penetration lies through this area. This absence of information makes it all the more fortunate that an experienced and keen observer with an intimate knowledge of the land and its people has recently visited this virtual "no-man's land" and has recorded his views on what he saw and heard there. His report is too long for incorporation in a work of this nature, and it must suffice to quote a few important extracts from it.

"It is apparently not realised in India or England", he has written, "what a real menace the Soviet is in Central Asia. East of a line running north and south through Peshawar there is no system of Intelligence at all, and yet the territories that border on India are the arena of active open anti-British propaganda, and it is a grievous mistake to imagine that these subversive intrigues are unsuccessful and harmless . . . It requires no great effort of imagination to realise the danger of unchecked red intrigue in India, Tibet, and the border states and districts of Chitral, Punial, *et cetera*. . . . Unquestionably, much of the Bolshevik intrigue is clumsy and muddle-headed, though more so to us than to the people for whom it is produced; but it certainly achieves a considerable measure of success, being most seductive and pernicious, and far from deserving of contempt."

The writer goes on to say that a review of the past five years in Sinkiang can only emphasise the steady growth of Bolshevist influence to the detriment of British. It was not reasonable to expect that Russia could be kept in the state of subjection in which she found herself when the Soviet Consulates were first established, but the ease with which she has recovered her position in Central Asia is due in no small measure to a mistaken policy of *laissez faire*.

The First Step Towards Soviet Domination. Since those words were written, Moscow's increasing efforts have been rewarded by the conclusion of a trade agreement with the local Chinese rulers, which has given to Soviet representatives greater freedom of movement and has opened up communication with Russia. The development of trade encouraged by Russian subsidies has proceeded apace, and Moscow's influence has advanced from strength to strength, until the Bolshevik menace is the chief present pre-occupation of the local Government. The reality of this menace is considerably enhanced by the presence on the frontier of considerable Soviet forces which support the diplomatic prestige of the Soviet Consul-General at Urumchi and give him a unique position in Sinkiang affairs. The growing weight of Russian economic pressure with this diplomatic and military backing may, so the Chinese authorities fear, draw Sinkiang within the iron circle of the Soviet system in a few years time.

A New Soviet in the Making. Though it is difficult to estimate how far these fears are justified, or how far Moscow's efforts are inspired by commercial and how far by political motives, yet there can be no doubt that she would take political advantage of a successful rising at Hami against the provincial Government, or of disturbances following the collapse of the paper currency and a consequent financial crisis, either or both of which seem likely to occur in the not very distant future. Complete Soviet domination of the province will thereafter be only a matter of time. In fact, there seems no doubt that so recently as the summer of 1931, Sinkiang was only saved from a sanguinary rebellion and subsequent

Bolshevik domination by an eleventh-hour decision by the Chinese authorities to enlist White Russians (of whom there is a considerable colony at Kuldja) to fight the revolting Tunjans and by the timely arrival of a consignment of arms and ammunition purchased from India. Had the Tunjan revolt succeeded, it would have been followed by an immediate advance on, and the almost certain capture of Urumchi, which, in its turn, would probably have been the signal for a widespread rising in northern Sinkiang which the degenerate Chinese troops could never have suppressed. The Tunjans, who inhabit large tracts in the north of the province, would probably have been joined by other tribes, many of which are smarting under a sense of Chinese injustice, and the Soviet's long sought opportunity would at last have come. Already ninety per cent of the export and import trade of the province is in Russian hands, and an earlier chapter has shown how easy is the step from economic to political domination. Inner Mongolia is said on good authority to be full of Communist agents, who are attempting to penetrate this remote part of the fallen Chinese Empire, and from all accounts it would appear that the day is not far off when Sinkiang will follow its sister provinces in Central China. That day will extend the sphere of Soviet influence to within a few miles of India's northern frontier, and another convenient outpost will have been established from which to penetrate India and flood her provinces with agents and propaganda material. In fact, this thought has never been very far from Moscow's mind during the past few years and even so long ago as May 1928 the Russian newspaper, *Echo*, of Shanghai, gloated as follows:—"Now they have taken possession of the region they know that by doing so they are becoming directly connected with northern India via Kuldja, Aksu, Kashgar, and on to the Pamirs. From Sinkiang there are several routes to India, but the best for the Bolsheviks is one situated near the border. From the above information it is seen that the Bolsheviks are not losing time and are forwarding in the direction of India, large quantities of Communist literature, ammunition, and other supplies. With the seizure of Sinkiang, the Bolsheviks have solved

the problem of close proximity to British India; now, if they succeed in obtaining influence in Afghanistan, the whole of northern India will be in a circle of Communist territory and consequences will show sooner or later."

Calumnies of Britain. A subsequent chapter will give an idea of how Moscow sought, by the circulation and publication of lying rumours, to promote an attack on British interests in Yunnan and also across the Burmese border during 1926. It will, therefore, be of some interest to select from a number of similar recent cases a short example of like propaganda in respect of Sinkiang in 1932. Amongst the published speeches delivered at the Anti-War Congress in Amsterdam in August 1932 was that of Rattan Singh, "delegate from the Hindustan *Ghadr* Party and the Punjab Workers' and Peasants' Party", and a man to whose words close association with the Communist International gives special emphasis. In the course of a lengthy harangue he said:—"On the other side, the neighbouring governments of India, Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet have been bought by the British Imperialists. The Lama of Tibet is already at war against China at the instigation of Britain. The British armies are awaiting orders to enter Chinese Turkestan from Gilgit, Leh, and Chitral cantonments in order to occupy Yarkand, Khotan, and Kashgar, the strategical points at the Soviet frontier. Many spies and agents are already at work in that territory to do the spade work for the British occupation." Past experience leads one to regard pronouncements such as these as the writing on the wall which it would be unwise to ignore.

"Professor" Nicholas K. Roerich. It is necessary now to digress and to travel southward to the Kulu Valley which is within easy reach (so far as journeys in that part of the world are easy) of both Kashgar and Yarkand. There has established himself at Nagar in this valley a suspicious individual known as Professor Nicholas Roerich (or deRoerich as he has preferred to call himself since he claimed French citizenship in 1931). This "professor's" history presents as queer an admixture of lying hypocrisy and plausible artis-

tic and cultural activities, as does that of Madam Blavatsky herself, and for this reason, if for no other, it would be most unwise to disregard even seemingly improbable interpretations of his actions. That part of his history which is relevant to this note relates to his journey from India to Moscow and Leningrad in 1924 and the warm welcome he received at each of those places, his return through Tibet in 1926, and his final re-entry into the country through Pondicherry at the beginning of 1931 armed with a French passport and bearing a French name. When Sir David Petrie's book was written, Roerich and his two sons, George and Sviatoslov, and his secretary, Shivayeff, had been black-listed as persons to whom visas for India should not be granted. By a chain of unfortunate circumstances, however, the family succeeded in overcoming this bar to their ingress and are now ensconced in the Kulu Valley in the north of the Punjab.

Roerich has claimed that he is an Imperialist Russian who found considerable favour with the late Tsar, but his safe passage through the heart of Soviet territory, and the cordial reception which was given to him on arrival in Leningrad, have rightly caused very considerable doubts to be cast upon this claim, doubts, moreover, which are considerably enhanced by his later appearance, first as an American, and then as a French subject. To these are added the facts that he was given a Soviet passport for his journey through Tibet at a time when Communist designs upon that country were the order of the day, and was allowed, in spite of the most stringent currency regulations, to carry with him sufficient money to enable him to distribute largesse wherever he went in Tibet. These facts caused the Tibetans, too, to entertain considerable doubt as to the probity of Roerich's intentions, so much so that, had not the Government of India intervened, Roerich and his party would either have starved to death or returned whence they came. They were, instead, admitted into Darjeeling on the understanding that they would leave India within a month. This, they failed to do, but departed some six months later, leaving behind Mme. Roerich, who established herself in the Kulu Valley, to be, as it proved later, a *raison d'entrée* into India for

the whole Roerich family. They there set up the "Urusvati Institute" the home, so they say, of a cultural society whose funds are derived from the Roerich Museum in New York. To outward appearances they spend their days in the pursuit of a variety of scientific studies and in acquiring an intimate knowledge of Tibetan literature, art, religion and sociology.

It is difficult to say categorically that Roerich is furthering, in some mysterious way, the Communist cause, but it is a significant fact that, with one exception, every person of ordinary discernment, who has come into contact with him, has reached the conclusion that he is up to no good. In the absence of more specific information as to his present activities (and the collection of such information is next to impossible owing to the peculiar situation of Kulu and to the wholesale distribution by Roerich of largesse to the people of the locality), and in view of the known fact that he is *persona grata* at Moscow, it is not unjustifiable to suspect that Nagar has been chosen because of its proximity to Sinkiang, where Russian influence is so strong and where Bolshevik agents abound, and because of the facilities which this state of affairs gives to Roerich, of keeping in constant touch with his Russian masters and also with Tibet, the necessity for which the next chapter seeks to explain.

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CHAPTER 8.

TIBET.

Soviet Missions. Since 1922, Moscow has had its eye on Tibet, in common with other eastern countries. From time to time Communist emissaries and deputations have visited Lhasa, the most recent having arrived at the beginning of 1932. Such visits have not been made empty-handed, and sufficient is known of their purpose to be able to say that they were sent in the hope that they might generate and support a pro-Soviet feeling amongst influential Tibetans. One such mission, which arrived at Lhasa in May 1927, brought with it four machine guns and two hundred rifles for presentation to the Dalai Lama, in return for which it was hoped that a Russo-Tibetan alliance would be made.

Further Communist Designs. Fortunately, these overtures produced little or no effect, but the Communists still persist in their designs as is shown by the following extract from the official record of decisions reached at a meeting of the Communist International on the 31st October 1930:—"Decided to instruct the I. K. K. I. to take steps to combine the existing national revolutionary groups in Tibet into a National Party and to instruct the I. K. K. I. to nominate Comrade Dordzhiyev (Dorjiev) as president of the Central Committee of the proposed new party". The equivalent of £20,000 was to be assigned for these activities in Tibet.

Customary Propaganda. For reasons given elsewhere, the frequent allusions in Communist publications during recent months to entirely fancied "Imperialist attacks on China through Tibet" have a special significance. One such, which appeared in the *Information Bulletin of the League Against Imperialism* for December 1932, ran as follows:—"The Chinese High Commissar for Tibet, Sang Tse Choum, who was recently expelled from Tibet, has issued a report on conditions there. He declares that the troops of the Dalai Lama are commanded by British officers and that the war

material employed is entirely of British origin. The officers are mainly drawn from the Indian army. The plans are for the establishment of an enlarged independent Tibetan kingdom which will be under British protection. British trading interests are developing intense activity in Tibet. In the schools, English is being taught instead of Chinese." Such statements bear their own refutation to those who have even the haziest knowledge of conditions in Tibet, but Chapter 9 will show what results attended the circulation of similarly fabricated reports in regard to Burma and Yunnan in 1926.

A Theory regarding Roerich's Aims. It has been said in the preceding chapter that "Professor" Roerich is ensconced in the Kulu valley and that amongst his other pursuits is a study of Tibetan literature and customs. This study is a sequel to the highly suspicious visit which he paid to Tibet at about the same time as the Soviet mission was there in 1926. An interesting theory has been propounded by a well-informed observer of Tibetan affairs in an attempt to explain the extreme persistence of Roerich's attempts to enter India. This theory proceeds somewhat on the following lines, and there must be borne in mind, while reading it, what was also said in the preceding chapter, that it would be unsafe to disregard even the most improbable report regarding Roerich and his intentions.

The Coming Incarnation of Buddha. The trend of thought in Tibet to-day, as influenced by prophecies and writings from the monasteries, is towards a tremendous upheaval in the near future. The actual date is vague, but it seems to be an accepted fact throughout Tibet that it is coming—and the sooner the better. The general idea is that a second incarnation of Buddha is due about 150 years hence. He is to be preceded by two conquerors—the first, an alien from the west, who will conquer the whole country, and the second from the mysterious regions in the north, who will reconquer the country and convert it back to Buddhism.

Communism in the Monasteries. Like the rest of the world, Tibet also has its share of the Soviet

undercurrent, and there is no doubt that certain monasteries already contain Soviet agents. The superstitious character of the people provides fertile soil for any clever master-mind, and, with the way paved by prophecies, it would not be a difficult matter for the first conqueror to carry all before him even during the present generation. From their published works and their conversation, it is quite clear that the Roerichs have a full understanding of, and a fervid interest in this Tibetan prophecy and that they have made a very deep study of the subject. It is known, too, that they have kept in direct touch with Tibet for many years and they probably know as much of its life, belief, customs, and conditions as any other living westerner. On his return to India through Tibet in 1928, Roerich distributed largesse on a very lavish scale and it is most improbable that in the "country of the proletariat", from which he came, he would have been allowed to carry funds sufficient to enable him to do so unless with the Comintern's approval. This practice continued in Darjeeling, where he always paid at least double the price asked for Buddhist relics or manuscripts which he desired to obtain.

Kulu, a Coign de Vantage. All this being so, the selection of Kulu, on the very borders of Tibet, as the only place where Roerich's "artistic research" can be properly carried out, becomes the more interesting, and it is permissible to ask whether the conqueror from the west will not be Georges deRoerich, the professor's son, the man who has made a life-study of the wisdom of the Lamas and who combines it with a western education. Whether Buddhist or non-Buddhist matters little to Georges. He is equally qualified to fill either rôle. Good stage-management on the part of the Bolsheviks could pave the way for either or for both. With his knowledge of Tibet and with the aid of Russian money, it should not be difficult for the Roerichs to buy over many influential lamas into prophesying the conqueror's immediate coming and into acclaiming Georges deRoerich as that conqueror when the time is ripe. The death of the Dalai Lama might well be the moment for which they are waiting.

Kulu is equally accessible to Lhasa and to Moscow and the Roerichs established there are in a most favourable position wherefrom to observe conditions both in India and Tibet. He is still spending money lavishly and has already bought the goodwill of the district and established his name as a philanthropist in that and surrounding areas. He has, moreover, in his employ the best Buddhist scholar from the Darjeeling district.

An Eye to the Main Chance. The writer of this note concludes with the words: "That the Soviet should not avail themselves of this extraordinary opportunity of furthering their plans of world conquest, seems to me inconceivable. . . . I am firmly convinced that they, the Roerichs, are ready and fully prepared even now for any political crisis which may occur at any moment in mid-Asia."

Comment is unnecessary unless it be that, in the words of the author, "it may seem fantastic to the average person, but to an imaginative Russian nothing is fantastic, nor, with the Soviet behind it, can any scheme be too stupendous to be possible".

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CHAPTER 9.

WESTERN CHINA AND BURMA.

Early Attentions from Moscow. Although the wave of Communism which swept China in 1925 and 1926 did not extend so far west as Yunnan, yet it was hardly to be expected that the unsettled conditions which followed in its train would not have repercussions on the borders of Burma. Early in 1926, a Jewish Communist agent named Borisov, better known for his earlier intrigues in Tibet, found his way to Yunnan from where he appeared to be conducting a campaign of Communist propaganda across the French border. Very little is known of his real activities in Chinese territory, but the presumption to be drawn from subsequent events and from the knowledge of what happened further east is that he was the advance-guard of the coming Communist invasion of Yunnan. Whatever the truth, by September 1926, Tengyueh, the capital of western Yunnan, was in the hands of a certain Colonel Liu who declared allegiance to Fan-Sheh-Sheng, a Cantonese general whose ambition it had been to conquer the province and bring it under Bolshevik control. Although the "rebel" occupation of the city which followed Colonel Liu's *coup d'état* was shortlived, it was the signal for the outbreak of a widespread campaign of what is loosely termed "banditry" which affected many parts of the province.

The presence in Yunnanfu, the provincial capital, of a number of trained Communist agitators under the control of a one-time captain in the Chinese army, during 1927 resulted in a strengthening of anti-British propaganda. A boycott of British goods was declared, shop-keepers were exhorted to make no sales to British households, servants in the employ of British subjects were called upon to leave their posts, and the English hospital was required to be handed over and one of its doctors was to be dragged through the streets as a "running dog" to the foreigners. So acute did the position become that it was found necessary to evacuate all British and American subjects from the interior of

the province and all European women and children even from Yunnanfu itself.

Misrepresentation of British Intentions.

That the hand of Moscow was to be seen in all this there is no shadow of doubt, for on the 20th December 1926, the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International addressed the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang in Canton in the following terms:—"If there should be intervention, England will have to throw Indian troops against Canton. But, dear comrades, we are sure that you have sufficient determination to move the revolutionary troops of Canton against the north-east provinces of India before the British military clique stretch forth their hands to strangle the Chinese revolution. British Imperialism, aware of the danger, is taking steps to increase the military forces on the Indo-Chinese frontier, but, under the existing menace from the peoples of the Middle East and the proletariat of the Soviet Central Asiatic Republics, in order to repel the advance of revolutionary forces it will be compelled to call a considerable number of native proletarians liable for military service, a fact which can only further the development of the revolutionary movement in India itself. There is no doubt that the appearance of victorious Chinese revolutionary troops in India would evoke a wave of national-revolutionary movement among the Indian proletariat.

"We believe that before British Imperialism has created a military threat to Yunnan and the south-west provinces of China, it is essential that the national-revolutionary Government of Canton, with a view to preventing attack, should commence the struggle first. A plan was drafted some time ago by the military delegation of Canton, with the assistance of the best military specialists of the U.S.S.R., for an advance by the Cantonese troops upon Burma. It appears to us that the time for putting this plan into effect has now arrived."

Some Results of Propaganda. There is good reason to believe that the Canton Government, acting upon this suggestion, decided to form a strong force to operate in Yunnan in order to repel a fancied British

attack from Burma. This force would be prepared to advance into Burma should occasion arise. Although, as a result, probably, of Communist pre-occupation elsewhere, no serious military operations eventuated, yet the history of this period is interesting in that it throws light on the many-sided methods by which the Communist International works its will.

Shortly after the letter quoted above was written, stories began to appear, first in the Calcutta paper *Liberty* (then the property of the Bose brothers), then in Chinese papers, and later in the form of rumours and leaflets in Yunnan itself, of a concentration of British troops on the Burma-Chinese border with a view to an attack on Chinese territory. So sedulously was this entirely spurious report circulated that, in spite of official assurances of its falsity, it eventually formed the basis of the attack on British interests in southern China, an account of which has already been given.

Similar Tactics Again. To-day, too, there is everywhere talk by Communists of the "impending Imperialist war on Soviet Russia", and in a paper read in December 1932 to the Labour Research Bureau, the London organisation which trained Phillip Spratt and sent him to India, there appeared the following passage:—"the suggestion of a war on Russia will stimulate the working class of this country to a defence of Russia which will have an immense psychological effect on their own reactions to revolution."

Yunnan, a Base for Attacks on India. Lack of adequate preparation caused the Communist Party of China to fail in its mission of "Sovietizing" the province of Yunnan, but the question of making it a base for attacks on India is ever present to the minds of Moscow's advisers. In 1929, for instance, when the earlier troubles had subsided, the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was again advised "to institute more intensive activities in the Chinese province of Yunnan" and "to extend Comintern activity to the North-Eastern Frontier areas of India".

A Set-back to Communism. The advent of Lung Yun, a general of the Kuomintang school, on the scene in 1929 put an end, for the time being, to further plotting, and by 1932 he had succeeded in giving to the province much needed peace and a stable administration. This he accomplished, firstly by reducing the size of his army and the power of subordinate commanders, and secondly by a ruthless destruction of "bandits". At the moment, therefore, Burma's eastern neighbour holds no fears for her, but a peace that is built on the strength of character and statesmanship of a single man cannot endure for ever. Indeed it is whispered that Lung Yun's wife has been the real power in the land, and the report of her very recent death has already caused a revival of those very fears which were so present to the Burmese authorities during 1926 and 1927. Very recently, too, a report has been received from a reliable quarter that a deputation, consisting of one Indian and seven Indo-Chinese Communists, has visited Yunnanfu from Burma on a special secret mission to Yunnan and Indo-China the object of which is not known at the time of writing.

Burma. The similarity, from the Communist point of view, which exists between the Chinese province of Yunnan and the Indian province of Burma—separated as they are only by a long straggling land frontier—makes it necessary to include in this chapter a short account of Communist intentions in the latter province, whose problems are so different from those of India proper. This incursion into what is now a part of India is the more justifiable when the possible separation of Burma from India is kept in view, and when it is remembered that the recent entirely independent rebellion has revealed the existence of all the elements necessary for a first class revolution if Communist organisation is allowed to make any considerable headway.

Chinese Communists in Rangoon. In Rangoon is located a small, and hitherto entirely ineffectual, group of Chinese, which is supposed to control Communist activities, under the general supervision of the Singapore headquarters, both in Burma and Yunnan. Unavailing efforts have been made from time to time

to improve this organisation, and the most recent proposal is that a Cantonese, trained in Singapore, should be sent to take charge. Arrangements have now reached the stage where money has been sent from Rangoon to pay for the cost of this "comrade's" passage. (Another such proposal, which was frustrated by action taken by the Shanghai police, is referred to in Chapter 10.) While, therefore, the situation in Burma can for the moment be viewed with complete equanimity, so far as Communism is concerned, there is definite evidence that Moscow still has designs on this province. Amongst this evidence is the strong support which Communist bodies in London are affording to those who advocate that Burma shall remain an integral unit in a Federated India. For once, capitalists, such as those who control the Scindia Steam Navigation Company, and Communists, such as Shapurji Saklatvala, are speaking with one voice. As was said in Chapter 1, Moscow imagines that her doctrines will be allowed greater play under an Indian Government than under the present Government of India, and is naturally perturbed at the thought of her plans being upset by the existence of a wedge of territory which is to remain under the direct control of the British Government. These sentiments were well expressed in a statement which was circulated at the Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain held in London from the 12th to the 15th November 1932: "The North-West Frontier will still be a special preserve, an armed camp for attack upon the U.S.S.R. Burma will be separated, as the Simon Commission suggested, as a wedge to drive between the Soviet territories of southern China, and the revolutionary movements of India. The Viceroy will still retain despotic powers; the armed forces will still be at the disposal of the Imperial Government. Burma will be bound tighter to the Empire than ever before." It is not necessary to look very deep below the surface in order to discern the hopes upon which Moscow had been building.

Saklatvala's Activities. Moscow's plans for the future are contained in a series of letters from S. D. Saklatvala, one of her mouthpieces in London, to the

leader of one of the organisations believed to be responsible for the recent rebellion. These letters contain the usual injunction to sever all connection with the Indian National Congress, and urge, instead, co-operation with eastern branches of the League Against Imperialism and the establishment of either open or secret contact with the "Chinese Soviet Republic". (Parenthetically, it may be mentioned that one of them contained the oft-repeated warning that Britain's motive in the separation of Burma is "to prepare for a huge world-war, in which Burma is to be one of the most important bases of war for British Imperialist armies, armaments and war supplies".) One of the fruits of his advice would seem to be the recent appearance of a new Burmese weekly with a cover design, which conveys the impression of a Red terror stalking across the earth with a flaming torch and making its sinister way towards the factories of Capital. In the hands of the crowd are to be seen the Communist hammer and sickle.

It is known also that Saklatvala is doing unceasing work amongst Burmese students in England and that one of them at least has been selected for training in the Lenin Institute in Moscow prior to proceeding to China, there to act as a Communist link between Burma and Russia. Others are to follow him in order that trained men may be available both for work in Burma and as links in neighbouring countries. It is unnecessary to point a moral. The course of events in French Indo-China, which are briefly described in Chapter 11, may be allowed to speak for themselves.

An Independent Opinion. It may be mentioned here that a Japanese official, with a right to express his views on the subject, recently gave it as his opinion that in a few years' time there would be a Russian drive towards India through Afghanistan and that the Communists intend simultaneously to make use of their very strong position in south-western China in order to disturb the French in Indo-China and the British in Burma. He did not anticipate that their activities would take the form of regular military operations, but that they would be more in the nature of a vigorous propaganda campaign and not-too-peaceful penetration.

CHAPTER 10.

THE FAR EASTERN BUREAU, SHANGHAI.

Direction from Shanghai. It is now necessary to go somewhat further afield, to the centre of all Communist activities in the Far East—the Far Eastern Bureau and the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Congress in Shanghai. This step is essential in order that subsequent chapters may be seen in their true perspective, and in order to give a clear idea of the devious means by which Moscow exercises control over the movement to which it has given birth.

Joseph Ducroux, the Trader. In the last week of May 1931, the Singapore police arrested a Frenchman named Joseph Ducroux. Arriving in Singapore on the 27th April 1931 under the name of Serge Le Franc, he rented an office in a respectable business quarter and did a certain amount of legitimate business on behalf of a French firm of steel product manufacturers which he claimed to represent. That he had other interests was discovered shortly afterwards when he was found to be associating in a most secretive manner with known leaders of the local Communist movement. Ducroux had previously come to notice not only as one of M. N. Roy's agents in Marseilles in 1926, but also as being connected with another French business organisation, Messrs. *Chapeaux Freres*, in Shanghai from 1927 till 1929. The views which were voiced at the conclusion of Chapter 3 have gained very considerable support from the concealed subversive activities of Joseph Ducroux.

The Results of his Arrest. His arrest, itself of great importance, led to the discovery in Shanghai, a week later, of Communist records of far wider application. These documents are unique, as affording practically complete information of the Comintern's and Profintern's underground activities, extending over a period of about a year, in China, Japan (including

Formosa and Korea), Indonesia, Malaya, and the Philippine Islands.

The Functions of the F.E.B. and the P.P.T.U.S. Throughout the above area, the controlling bodies in Moscow were found to have been acting through two clandestine sub-organisations in Shanghai, called the "Far Eastern Bureau" and the "Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat of the Red International of Labour Unions" or the Shanghai office of the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat, whose accounts and correspondence were among the papers seized. The P.P.T.U.S. was the directive agency in the Far East of the Profintern, the name given to the International of the Red Trades-Unions. The Profintern is directly under the Comintern and concerns itself solely with the organization and preparation of "labour" and wage-earners for world revolution. The Comintern is the council of the Third International, which, in turn, is directed by a committee known as the I.K.K.I. This committee numbers among its members several members of the Politbureau, the organization of nine or ten men who jointly form the head of the Government of Russia. The power of the P.P.T.U.S. was, therefore, enormous; it had at its disposal almost unlimited funds. These local bodies, acting in the closest co-operation, carried out, in the countries specified above, the exact functions of the Comintern and Profintern respectively, by which, indeed, they were financed, instructed and controlled through the medium of other sub-agencies in Berlin. Both were staffed by paid European Communists, forming a group of about a dozen principals, together with a number of Orientals for translation and liaison work.

The Far Eastern Bureau, as the area counterpart of the Comintern, was the senior formation of the two, and its function, briefly stated, was the translation into action of Comintern policy and directions: its objectives were, in fact, to bring about, by the spread of Communist doctrine and by opportunist agitation, conditions favourable for the seizure of political power by the proletariat and the eventual establishment of Soviet *régimes* on the

model of the U.S.S.R., where these conditions should have been induced and revolution successfully engineered.

The Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat of the Red International of Labour Unions was responsible for assisting in the attainment of these objectives by a parallel co-ordinated advance in the economic sphere by means of industrial agitation, leading, through the political strike weapon, to economic dislocation.

These dual functions involved a great variety of detailed organisation, propaganda and intrigue, including the payment of subsidies on behalf of Moscow to regional Communist and extreme trades-union organisations; the instigation, organisation and guidance of many types of Communist and trades-union effort; the selection, preparation and dispatch of local Communists to Moscow for training as propagandists and soldiers; the penetration of the "opposing forces" (*i.e.*, the Governments and armed forces of the countries concerned) through spies and propagandists; the fomenting of disaffection and of rebellion among the State forces in those countries; the fine adjustment of local Communist policy to fluctuations in the local situation, and constant consultation with Moscow by telegram, postal letter, and messenger.

Conspiratory Methods. These activities were concealed by systematic methods of conspiracy. The members of the Shanghai organisations were provided with forged or stolen passports and business or professional credentials, which served to disguise their real objects and enabled them to move freely in the area. Apart from personal tours, their regular meetings with the various formations of their "command" were held at separate establishments, a number of which were maintained in Shanghai for the purpose, and through the medium of liaison agents, whose knowledge of existing organisation and personnel was rigidly limited in order to minimise the consequences of arrest. Correspondence with Moscow, via Berlin, both by letter and telegram, was conducted in a cipher, which afforded a high degree of security, registered telegraphic addresses taken out in false names and post-office boxes or accommodation

addresses being used at both ends for receipt and dispatch. An elaborate courier system, too, existed for better communication with Moscow and with the countries in which the Shanghai organisations acted on Moscow's behalf. A "secret service" section was maintained to keep meetings under observation and, through spies planted in the Chinese and Settlement police, to keep the principals forewarned of impending police action.

The Magnitude of the Efforts. The full scope of the activities, betrayed in such comprehensive and minute detail by the impounded documents, can be outlined only very imperfectly in so brief a space as the present work, but an idea may be gathered of their diversity and magnitude from the fact that the expenditure of the two Shanghai organisations was, during the period in question, at the rate of approximately £150,000 per annum. Of this sum nearly £100,000 was being spent on Communist work in China, where the labours and expenditure of the Comintern had already been rewarded by the establishment of "Soviet Districts" in Fukien, Kiangsi, and Hupeh, and the Far Eastern Bureau was, therefore, handling a situation in the ultimate practical stage of revolution and "Sovietisation" rather than in the more academical stage of preparation.

Results Achieved. Elsewhere in the area, except in Japan, where Communism would seem to have been securely established in capable hands, the movement was in a comparatively backward state, lacking to a great extent the necessary personal direction and funds, but was, even so, shown by the papers to represent a more serious danger than the authorities of these countries had hitherto suspected. At the time of the seizure, the Communist situation in Indo-China and the Federated Malay States had been brought under serious review by the Far Eastern Bureau and the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat of the Red International of Labour Unions, which had sent a special emissary, the French Communist Joseph Ducroux, to study the situation on the spot.

A Future Programme. On Ducroux' reports an ambitious programme was at the time being drawn up, which involved the reorganisation of the existing Communist apparatus, the linking up of the Indo-Chinese movement with the Communist Party of France and that of Malaya with those of Burma, India, and Great Britain, the establishment of special Communist agents, including Tan Malaka, the notorious Indonesian Communist, at Rangoon and Singapore, and the expenditure of considerable sums of money in Burma and Malaya—\$45,000 gold for the former area and \$50,000 gold in the latter. The Secretariat's extreme interest in India during the four years of its existence in Shanghai was revealed by a series of articles which appeared in *Trud*, the *Pan-Pacific Worker*, and other similar organs of the Communist International or its subsidiaries.

Conclusion. The revelations made by the documents have undoubtedly strengthened the hand of local authorities by bringing up to date with unprecedented completeness their knowledge of Communist technique. The Comintern's plans over the whole area have no doubt suffered a set-back, and their organisation must have been seriously dislocated by the discovery of their secrets. Of the whole group of Communist organisers, however, only four were actually apprehended, and there are already indications that this dangerous organisation, backed by Moscow's brains and money and assisted by those whose activities it used to control, is again getting into its stride, and there can be little doubt that one of the inevitable effects of the recent resumption of diplomatic relations between Russia and China must be that the Third International will operate with greater facility throughout the Far East. Once it does so, it will not repeat the mistakes it has made before. Rather will it reappear as a more formidable and more implacable enemy of Imperialist countries and of capitalism in general.

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CHAPTER II.

FRENCH INDO-CHINA.

Early History. The serious rising in Indo-China with which the French had to deal in the latter half of 1930 was the result of agitation, nationalist and economic in itself, but skilfully fostered and engineered by Communist emissaries, extending over a number of years. The beginnings of what may well be its counterpart are now to be seen in Burma and, indeed, in the Dutch East Indies, and the history of the movement is, therefore, of more than usual interest. In 1912 there began in Annam a movement which had as its object the establishment of a Republican Government in imitation of that which had been set up in China at about that time. The movement never caused any serious anxiety, despite the impetus which it derived during the Great War from the German Legation at Bangkok, but its existence was revealed from time to time by terrorist outrages such as attacks on jails or frontier-posts, the poisoning of European troops, and small risings which were easily suppressed. Its leaders were gradually arrested or made to flee the country and by 1920 the movement had been practically eradicated.

A Communist Complexion. Of the next few years the French authorities themselves have written: "It was some considerable time before the effects of the capture of power in Russia by the Bolsheviks and the advent of Communism made themselves felt in Indo-China, despite its proximity to Canton, the seat of the evil. But, when the new rulers of the U.S.S.R. had taken stock of the success of their efforts in European countries and had turned their attention to the colonies of the countries of Imperialism and Capitalism, the situation began to develop rapidly, and the Communist movement in Indo-China assumed greater importance and demanded, up to the time of writing, considerably more attention. The extensive preaching of Communist ideas, the appeal to the baser instincts of a subject people already imbued with natural feelings of xenophobia, the

teaching of seditious war-cries to simple country-folk, and the systematic *mala fide* exploitation of numerous incidents, many of them highly coloured, which are inherent in the political or economic life of a nation, all presented a danger against which it was necessary to guard."

Nguyen Ai Quoc. This wave of Communism produced an Annamite leader who was in course of time to lead the most serious revolution which Indo-China has yet experienced. Nguyen Ai Quoc is his name, and his arrest by the Hong Kong police in 1931 must be accounted a most serious, however temporary, blow to Communism in the Far East. This individual was quickly removed to Moscow for training in Communist theory and ideals, whereafter he was employed in Canton as a Communist link between Indo-China and Russia and also as an instructor to those of his compatriots whom force of circumstances had driven there. These latter he induced to join a League of Oppressed Peoples which he had founded and in which were included Indians, Koreans, Formosans, Philipinos, Javanese, and even Siamese. He, himself, was in charge of the Annamite (the word includes inhabitants of Tonkin and Cochin-China also) section of this League which eventually resolved itself into a purely Annamite body with a membership which included almost all the revolutionarily-inclined Annamite emigrants in China. The ultimate object of this latter body was a national revolution and the inclusion of Indo-China in the United States of Soviet Russia.

Quoc's Work at Home. By a regular system of emigration and immigration Quoc succeeded in establishing a number of secret branch organisations within Indo-China itself; and a continual flow of raw material to Canton (and later to Hong Kong) and of finished propagandists to Indo-China was kept up for several years both by land and by sea. During this period a number of existing subversive organisations were drawn into the net. In 1927 the anti-Communist reaction set in in Canton, and Nguyen Ai Quoc was forced to flee to Russia, but later found his way to Siam. This *contre-*

temps undoubtedly delayed the coming revolution, but a new headquarters was eventually opened in Hong Kong and Nguyen Ai Quoc, now a fully accredited representative of the Communist International, was recalled from Siam and the work went on again to such effect that, within six months, branches of the Annamite Communist Party were functioning in all the more important factories, railways, steamship companies and public utility services (not excluding the arsenal at Saigon) in the three provinces of Indo-China.

Work Abroad. Despite his other preoccupations, however, he found time to attend, on behalf of the Far Eastern Bureau, the Third Representative Conference of the South Seas Communist Party, which, in April 1930, made radical changes in Communist organisation in the Far East—changes which placed Indo-China under the direct control of the Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai. In his address he laid stress upon the need for Chinese members to study the Malay language and to enlist Malay recruits. Nor did his interest in Malay and Javanese politics stop there; for the investigation of the Noulens case made it clear that he was concerned with the development of the Malay and Javanese parties throughout 1930 and for a part at least of 1931. He doubtless believed that his own particular project in Indo-China would be the more effective were it accompanied by similar risings in other colonial countries in the vicinity.

May Day, 1930. The French authorities thus describe the situation as it was on the 1st May, 1930, when matters came to a head: "When the time came, so thorough and extensive had been the preparations of the Communist Party of Annam that one was led to believe that it would continue its operations despite the repressive measures which had been vigorously employed against it for several years past, and particularly since the 1st May 1930 on which date there came the first serious disorders in the history of French Indo-China."

The 1930 Rebellion. Of the rebellion itself suffice it to say that it was carried out under the banner

of the hammer and sickle by local leaders and others who had returned for the purpose from Siam or from Moscow, the latter having been given training in Communist schools; that it was a most serious challenge to French Imperialism; and that the measures necessary to keep it in check taxed the resources of the French authorities on the spot to the utmost.

Survival of the Party. Despite its then suppression, the Annamite Communist Party is to-day, in the opinion of competent judges, undoubtedly one of the most active organisations in the Far East, a view to which considerable force is lent by the speed with which Communist agents from Indo-China made their appearance in Siam after the recent revolution there. Although, on the surface, the situation may be calm, nevertheless, propaganda continues and the numerous proceedings undertaken by the police against persons accused of conspiring against the State would appear to indicate that there is still a strong undercurrent of subversive activity. It may be taken as certain, however, that the French will not again allow the situation to develop as it did prior to May 1930, and that the Franco-Soviet Pact, very recently concluded, will not materially affect the position. France's Far Eastern dependencies will be held just as firmly as heretofore under France's Imperialist policy.

Wider Implications. The Annamite rising of 1930 carries a message to other Imperialist countries which is contained in the words: "There is no possible doubt that the Communist movement in Indo-China is a part of an international movement and that it is bound up with similar movements in neighbouring countries. The testimony of numerous Annamite Communists arrested during the rebellion and the documents seized establish this fact very conclusively." The report from which this translated extract is taken then proceeds to give three pages of examples taken at random from official files on the subject, and concludes with the words: "*Et nous concluons en disant qu'il n'y a pas une menace particulière annamite, chinoise, javanaise, ou malaise, mais un danger commun pour tous les pays*

colonisateurs; car l'action de nos adversaires est concertée à Moscou. Les intentions de l'Internationale Communiste ne sont d'ailleurs pas un secret. Les ' cahiers du bolchevisme ', les résolutions des Congrès, la Correspondance Internationale, les discours parlementaires nous en fournissent la matière et nous assistons dans le Pacifique—en Indochine et ailleurs—à la lente réalisation de ses plans."

If the views of the Japanese official which are given in Chapter 9 are worthy of credence—as undoubtedly they are—it would be well to heed the warning which these words give.

CHAPTER 12.

SIAM.

The Benefits of Firmness. Of Communism in Siam comparatively little is known and it has always been assumed that this isolated kingdom was comparatively free of the evil. It has been shown elsewhere, however, that certain important Annamite and Indonesian Communists have made Bangkok their headquarters from time to time, and it would be too much to hope that they did not take advantage of their visits to further a movement which their Moscow training had taught them was the life-blood of freedom. Indeed, there are straws which show that they did. In 1930, for instance, the Siamese Government, having learnt from previous experience that deportation did not serve their ultimate purpose, took more energetic measures against Communists within the kingdom, with the result that no less than thirty-one Communist agents were sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment each in the course of the year.


The Recent Revolution. Although the recent revolution cannot be set to the Communist account it has at least been productive of evidence in support of the view expressed above that Communism existed in a latent form within the Kingdom. Colonel Phya Song Suradej, one of the three military officers who signed the original manifesto by virtue of which the absolute monarchy came to an end, has not only Communist leanings but also a considerable following. The events which followed the initial *coup d'état* brought this colonel to the top and it was feared at one time that the new Constitution would resolve itself into some form of Soviet Republic. The moderates have, however, for the moment, carried the day and have relegated such fears to the background.

Attentions from Moscow. It was hardly to be expected that the Communist International would miss an opportunity such as recent events in Siam presented,

and it occasions but little surprise to learn that, within a few weeks of the first manifestations of revolt, a leading agent of the Third International for south-east Asia arrived in Siam, and that Tan Malaka, who was arrested in Hong Kong on the 10th October 1932, was also on his way to Siam "with money and instructions" from Shanghai. (Tan Malaka, it will be remembered, was the intended Comintern emissary to Burma whose plans were revealed by the searches in Shanghai in June 1931. His history is recorded in Chapter 14.) Nor is it difficult to believe the report that Communists from French-Indo China are very active in trying to stir up trouble in Siam. Such things are but the ordinary routine of what a soldier has described as "soft spot tactics"—the basis of Communist policy to-day. The membership of the Siamese Communist Youth is said to be in the neighbourhood of 1,000 and future efforts are to be concentrated on increasing this figure and, as most of the existing members are Hailams, on securing a greater leavening of Siamese themselves. It has also been suggested to the leaders of this organisation that the Royal Family and the Buddhist religion are suitable subjects for attack by propaganda.

Siam's Future. It would probably be wrong to attach very great importance to the attempts which are obviously being made to foster the spirit of revolution and to divert it into Communist channels, but the history of recent events in French Indo-China forbids one to disregard the small beginnings from which great movements spring. It is, moreover, an unpleasant fact that since the present Government came into power in Siam, representatives of the People's Party have been touring the country explaining the new constitution, emphasizing the principles of freedom and equality, promising to relieve the sufferings of the working classes, and reiterating on every possible occasion that, under the present *régime*, the power of the people is supreme. Such speeches as these can serve only to make fertile the ground whereon the Communists design to plant their seed, and, when to them is added a growing disrespect amongst all classes for established authority, conditions

begin to approach the ideal from a Communist point of view. It can only be a matter of time before the man in the paddy fields hears, however vaguely, political murmurings; how he will react to these, if he reacts at all, remains to be seen. But everything points to the fact that Siam has yet a long and perilous journey to perform before its troubles are past, and the teaching of history is that Moscow will not permit it to make that journey alone.



CHAPTER 13.

THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS AND THE FEDERATED MALAY STATES.

The Advent of Communism. Communist history begins, so far as Malaya is concerned, in about 1924, in which year a number of existing Hailam clubs, already dominated by Communists, were amalgamated into the "Nanyang General Labour Union" centred at Singapore. This organisation maintained close touch with similar organisations in neighbouring countries. It was not, however, till 1925 that the South Seas Communist Party, which was later to play so large a part in Malayan politics, came into being and set up its "Central" office in Singapore. Early the following year, this new party held its first conference at Singapore, seven delegates being sent from Canton to lead and instruct it. One result of this conference was the formation of a number of night schools, clubs etc., which subsequent events proved to be hot-beds of disorder. A second conference took place a year later and was followed by a spate of Communist propaganda and by efforts to create disorder and to stir up hatred of the police. This led to serious trouble in Singapore a few months later, which was only suppressed by drastic action by the local authorities. The Anti-Imperialist League made its appearance in China in June 1928 and within a year twelve branches had been formed in Malaya, the membership having reached the neighbourhood of 4,000 by the end of 1929—this despite continued action which had been taken against Communism generally since 1927.

Subdivision of Duties. The Third Representative Conference of the South Seas Communist Party, which was held in April 1930, resulted in a drastic reorganisation of the Communist movement in the Far East. The South Seas Communist Party was itself dismembered and Indo-China, hitherto under the control of "Central" situated in Singapore, was brought directly under the wing of the Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai; while a separate Malayan Communist Party

was formed to further the movement in Malaya alone. Burma, Siam, and the Dutch East Indies were to be attached to the Malayan Communist Party until such time as they might be sufficiently organised to stand by themselves. When that day came, they too, like Indo-China and Malaya, would have direct relations with the Far Eastern Bureau.

Joseph Ducroux, the Communist. So well did this new arrangement work and so rapidly did the Malayan Communist Party develop, that within a year Moscow considered that the position merited special European supervision on the spot. Thus there came to Singapore, on the 27th April 1931, Joseph Ducroux *alias* Serge Le Franc, the agent of the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat whose history has already been given in an earlier chapter. Events have proved that his orders were those of the Communist International, namely, to co-ordinate and reorganise, more especially on racial lines, the activities of Communists in Malaya, Indonesia, Siam, Calcutta, and Rangoon, and his arrest by the Singapore police within a few weeks of arrival came as a fitting climax to their persistent and energetic campaign against Communism during the previous five or six years. Unfortunately, Ducroux was only sentenced to eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment, and if he has not already regained his freedom he will do so in the very near future. For an almost identical offence in Shanghai both Mr. and Mrs. Noulens were sentenced to death at Nanking in August 1932, and, although this sentence has subsequently been commuted to one of penal servitude for life, they will never again be in a position even to attempt to incite many millions of ignorant workers and peasants to insurrection and bloody rebellion. China has, indeed, become wise by her own bitter sufferings.

Signs of Recovery. The far-reaching effects of this capture have already been described in Chapter 10, and it will suffice to say here that the blow which it dealt at Communism in the South Seas fell no less heavily in Malaya than elsewhere.

It has been shown, however, that there are already signs of a recovery in the headquarters in Shanghai. So too, in Singapore in particular and in Malaya generally. Shortly after Ducroux' arrest, for instance, "Central" addressed a letter to the Far Eastern Bureau asking for advice and assistance in the work of reconstruction; and the seizure of presses not only in Singapore itself, but also in Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan failed to lessen the output of notifications and instructions, many of which called for the reorganisation of the party in one way or another. Fortunately, the damage done by Ducroux' arrest to the very effective system of liaison between Singapore and Shanghai has not as yet been properly repaired, and Malaya appears to have been left more or less to its own devices since June 1931. How long this state of affairs will last it is difficult to foretell, but it may be mentioned that the receipt of news of the reorganisation of the Shanghai Secretariat was quickly followed by renewed attempts to gather up the broken threads of control which run through Singapore.

The result has been that the Malayan Communist Party has re-established contact with Shanghai and has sent a special envoy to act as liaison officer there. He was met at first with vague promises of assistance in money, materials, and men, but it has now been established, at the time of going to press, that the China "Central" is in touch with the F.E.B. and has received instructions from that source to order the Malayan Communist Party to select two Malays and one Indian comrade for proper training abroad under the direction of the Third International. On their return it is proposed that they should continue to be in direct touch with the Third International. It is also expected that the F.E.B. will send a representative to Singapore in the near future.

Internal Reconstruction. Meanwhile, the development of the party has proceeded on established lines, and it is clear that, if tin and rubber again come into their own (for Malaya is paradoxical in this respect, that lean days bring a decline in Communism owing to

lack of financial support), or if funds are again forthcoming from headquarters (and come they will soon or late, for the 50,000 gold dollars allotted for work in Malaya were not amongst the materials seized in Shanghai in June 1931), the movement will again spring into full and immediate life. The "Central" office still remains in Singapore, its discovery being a constant source of difficulty to the authorities. Extreme care is taken to shield the identity of the two or three persons who are the brains of the whole movement; devious and secret methods are adopted to conceal their connections with local committees, printing sections, postmen, couriers, and accommodation addresses. Regular correspondence is kept up with Burma, Siam and certain districts in the Dutch East Indies, while occasional attempts are made to secure "contacts" in Calcutta as well. These two or three, who are associated with the intimate administration of the movement, are certainly ardent in their duties. The tone of their instructions to their subordinates in every State is definite, comprehensive, and full of encouragement, and their line of future action has been clearly indicated (though not, perhaps, definitely settled) in recent days. A militant policy is to be adopted, Communists are to be allowed to join hands with ordinary criminals, churches are to be burnt, students are to be incited to mass insubordination, "no-tax" campaigns are to be organised, and everything possible is to be done to cause embarrassment to the Government.

Some Results of Propaganda. The first fruits of this propaganda campaign have been gathered in Johore, where thirty-five Hailam coolies burned down fifty acres of young rubber trees because their demand for higher wages was not conceded. A search of the coolie lines, the occupants having absconded, disclosed a quantity of virulent Communist literature. In Singapore, also, a successful attack has recently been made on the Roman Catholic Cathedral where a considerable amount of damage was done to the statuary. Another more recent instance occurred on the 12th December

1932, in a small village in Johore. Some three hundred Chinese essembled outside a coffee-shop; a bannerman then appeared; Communist pamphlets were distributed, crackers were fired as a signal, and the whole assembly then attacked two police constables, who were on duty in the village, and severely assaulted them with cudgels and iron bars. One managed to reach the police station nearby, and the other the house of the Inspector in charge of the district. The mob then advanced on the Inspector's house and he was forced to fire his revolver, killing two of the leaders. The significance of this incident lies in the fact that identical tactics had been adopted in Singapore on the previous day, and that it was only the prompt appearance of the riot squad of uniformed police which prevented similar results. A disturbing feature of the Singapore incident was the fact that the crowd contained a large body of students, many of them of respectable and wealthy parents—a fact to which reference will be made in Chapter 20. Although the movement in Malaya still remains largely a “paper war”, the teachings of recent years are having their effect, at any rate, in a few places.

The Composition of the Party. But chiefly are present efforts directed towards the recruitment of Indians and Malays to the various extant Communist organisations in accordance with Moscow's sudden realisation in 1930 or thereabouts that the Chinese were on the whole unsuccessful in promoting subversive racial movements. In Malaya, as too in Burma and elsewhere, the profession of Communism has so far been confined almost entirely to the Chinese. Despite the incessant labours, first of Alimin and Tan Malaka and later of Nguyen Ai Quoc, and despite its misleading name, the Malayan Communist Party remains to this day essentially a Chinese organisation, and it is only the Malayan General Labour Union (Communist only in form) which has attracted to its ranks a considerable number of the other two races. It seems probable that the dictum of Tan Malaka, the notorious Sumatran whose history is given elsewhere, is almost as true to-day as when

he pronounced it in 1926: "On account of differences in race and language and the Malay's laziness and love of pleasure, the only hope of revolution in Malaya lies with the Chinese." That Tan Malaka's and Nguyen Ai Quoc's persistent efforts have not been more successful is due to a variety of reasons some of which are discussed in the following extract from a recent official report from Singapore: "Fortunately, throughout this grave period of depression (from the beginning of 1931 onwards) the "Malay" Communist Party has not been formed; any sympathisers have generally been without any directing influence other than that of the Chinese heads of local divisional committees, themselves subjected to continual attrition as a result of police action. Lack of funds, the difficulties of language, contempt for the Chinese, and perhaps the general apathy of local Malays for any movement led by foreigners, the prosecution of the ideals of which involves a monthly subscription and some self-sacrifice without a *quid pro quo* in the form of easy terms of borrowing money, account for the fact that no dangerous progress has been made."

A Malay Renaissance. But, although Moscow's continuous broadcast sowing has failed to yield a material harvest or seriously to promote (where Malaya is concerned) her declared policy for 1932—"the intensification of the racial movement in the South Seas"—it could not, by very reason of its continuity and its volume, fail to produce some seedlings. It would have been too much to expect, for instance, that the post-war growth of strong indigenous nationalist and subversive factions in the Dutch East Indies would leave British Malaya unaffected. Nor could it be hoped that the Moscow-inspired rising, which resulted therefrom in 1926 and of which mention will be made in the next Chapter, would not have its repercussions in the Straits. Many of the leaders of this revolt sought asylum in Malaya, and investigations made at the time proved beyond doubt that British territory was being used as a base for further operations against the Dutch, although there was no di-

rect evidence that British-born Malays or Javanese were concerned in the plots. Be that as it may, the example which this movement and others of its kind provided to the natives of British Malaya, produced an awakening of political consciousness which had till then lain dormant. Its manifestations, fostered by a section of the Malay press, have been more apparent in 1932 than ever before, and have brought with them the latent danger of a movement sympathetic with the revolutionary elements in the Dutch East Indies. Such a movement, were it to come, is certain to receive the sympathetic attention not only of the local Communist Party, but also of those political agitators from the Dutch East Indies, who, having fled their country after the Communist rising of 1926, are still available for carrying out the declared policy of the Third International. The Singapore report from which I recently quoted (and to which, indeed, I am indebted for much of this chapter) concludes with the words: "The soil in Malaya may continue to be unproductive of results from a racial point of view as in the past; but the development of political consciousness amongst the Malays renders the possibility of success less remote. Java will always supply an inexhaustible stream of agitators to foster anything approaching a definite move towards Malay nationalism in this country. And in the light of past events, it is certain that the Third International will again supply funds to maintain any sound anti-Imperialist movement. Whether such a movement stands most chance of success in Malay through labour or through racial channels, is a matter of opinion. It remains certain only that the Third International will explore every avenue."

CHAPTER 14.

THE DUTCH EAST INDIES.

Similarity of Conditions. Like British India, the Dutch East Indies contain a teeming population, many elements of which are highly excitable and fanatical, and which furnish an admirably receptive soil for the seeds of subversive propaganda. Both countries are within easy reach of emissaries from China, and both dispatch yearly to the Hejaz large numbers of pilgrims who are liable to be tampered with by the agents of Moscow who have for many years past taken full advantage of the unique opportunities which this annual concourse of visitors from Eastern countries presents. The benefits to be derived from a comparative study of the results produced there by the same forces as we see in operation in India are, therefore, the greater on these accounts.

Sir David Petrie's Views on the 1926 Disorders. Although there were Communists to be found in the archipelago several years earlier, it was not till 1926 that Communism began seriously to spread to the lesser centres in Java and Sumatra. The closing months of that year, however, witnessed serious disorders. At page 260, *et seq.*, of his book, Sir David Petrie has thus described the course which events took and the lessons which they taught: "On the night of the 12th and 13th November 1926 serious riots broke out, more particularly in West Java (Batavia, Bantam, East and Central Preanger), accompanied by serious attempts to subvert authority in other districts, or the preparation for such attempts. The genesis of these disturbances, which were widespread and were suppressed only after considerable loss of life and property, is tolerably clear and is highly instructive. Since July 1925 the Indonesian Communist Party (Netherlands-Indian Communist Party) have been working on the lines of the resolutions passed at the Fifth World Congress at Moscow (middle of 1924) and at

a Communist Conference at Djocja (December 1924). These resolutions, as interpreted by the local leaders, laid down that the party objects were 'to struggle by all means possible, also by force of arms, for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and the foundation of an international Soviet republic as a preliminary to the total destruction of the State'. As in India, emphasis was laid on the necessity of creating an 'illegal' organisation alongside of the 'legal' one. Organising on these lines, and by the use of the group (cell) system, the 'Board of Leaders' of the Indonesian Communist Party brought into being 'illegal fighting organisations, which at a given moment, would have to assist in an armed attempt to seize governmental power'. It appears that the propaganda conducted by the Board of Leaders in the second half of 1925 was principally aimed at Labour, this step being in accordance with resolutions passed at the First Congress of Transport Workers in countries adjoining the Pacific, which was held at Canton in June 1924, and which was attended by two important leaders from Java. The Communists throughout the country not only conducted 'strong' propaganda among the existing Labour Unions, but endeavoured to establish new ones, the first fruits of this campaign being a series of strikes among these organised workers. The Government, however, were able to suppress these strikes, which were accompanied by deeds of terrorism and intimidation, so that the idea to turn the local strikes into a general strike did not materialise. The Board of Leaders of the I.C.P. at Batavia had been able to open at Soerabaya a branch of the Secretariat of the 'Red Eastern Labour' at Canton, which was affiliated with the Red International of Labour Unions, Moscow. There was also a proposal to establish at Singapore a bureau which would form a connecting link with the Netherlands-Indian Communists, and take charge of propaganda in Indo-China and elsewhere. The existence of such a branch has been confirmed, as well as the connections of the Javanese leaders therewith, but its activities seem to have been far more important as affecting the Dutch East Indies than Singapore itself.

“ Methods of Organising. A marked feature of the party's policy was to draw the criminal fraternity within their organisation, the idea being to strengthen the party of illegal action, and to devise means for the use of violence against the Government. Another feature, for which India furnishes an almost exact parallel, was the attempt to secure the co-operation of the national revolutionary organisations and to get them to work under the ‘ intellectual leadership ’ of the Communists. Determined efforts were also directed to the formation of cells among the army and the police, although in this direction the amount of success achieved was very limited. On the other hand, the number of recruits secured from general sources appears to have been very great—vastly in excess of even the greatest membership that Communists have ever claimed for themselves in India. In Bantam, membership tickets were sold to the number of 12,000, while in Palembang a ticket found bore the number 21,114. In these figures the Dutch authorities found clear proof that a small nucleus of well-disciplined Communists, by means of effective organisations and false slogans and promises, could create an amount of discontent that led up to spontaneous explosions and mass resistance to the authority of Government.

“ The Timing of the Outbreak. The actual facts of the outbreak, which can be read elsewhere, are of far less importance for the purposes of this book than the methods by which the outbreak itself was brought about. It seems clear that the ‘ high command ’ busied itself more with the illegal side of the organisation, with the result that the outbreak may have taken place in advance of the general state of preparedness for concerted action. To this result the inclusion of the criminal riff-raff and the direct encouragement of the terroristic idea must have contributed in no small degree. That the lower elements must have greatly predominated would appear to be a necessary consequence of the fact that, between the organisers and the rank and file, there was no ‘ nationalist bourgeoisie ’, or politically-minded middle-class, such as is to be found in the chief direct-

ion and control of revolutionary movements in India. Thus, although the Communist teaching seemingly found and filled a political vacuum among the Javanese population, the progress made was notable for the numbers rather than the quality of the recruits. In spite of this, it was said that the 'high command' had been so successful in Bolshevising the party, in tightening up discipline and in intensifying agitation, that it was only at the eleventh hour that the magistracy and police gained some insight into what was going to happen."

The Survival of Communism. An attempt will be made to show at a later stage in this book that the conditions which prevailed in India some twelve or fifteen months later were not dissimilar; the rebellion's reactions in Malaya have already been remarked upon in the foregoing chapter. Undeterred by this early failure, the agents of Moscow continued to work and to organise, assisted to a large extent by five or six Indonesians who had recently completed a course of training in the Communist academy in Moscow. The year 1928 saw a flood of the most inflammable Communist literature, followed, in 1929, by the formation of branches of the Anti-Imperialist Union in four important places in the Dutch East Indies, and it was at this time that the Dutch police again took matters in hand and made a large number of searches and arrests and, finally, deportations. Subsequent investigation showed that "cells" had been established in a number of centres, which had grown into larger organisations and had, where possible, extended their influence in hitherto innocuous existing organisations, one of the more important of these having actually been induced to affiliate itself to the League Against Imperialism in Berlin.

Moscow's "Nationalist" Policy in Operation. In 1930, convincing evidence was forthcoming of Communist attempts to penetrate the extreme nationalist association, the *Partai Nationaal Indonesia* (now the *Pendidekan Nasional Indonesia*), whose leader, Mohamed Hatta, was studying in a college in Rotterdam. These attempts were in some measure a success, though it is probable that the nationalist leaders were merely flirting

with the Communists in order to give additional trouble to the Dutch. As a competent critic remarked at the time, however, "the inordinate self-satisfaction of the local nationalists, who may think themselves able to use Communist allies for their own ends, may at any time easily furnish the more subtle Communist agents with useful material for reviving subversive activity". His view was confirmed by what happened in Indo-China during that year.

About two hundred more deportations took place in the middle of 1931, but the movement continued to subsist. Alongside it, too, nationalist colleagues waxed strong. A recent report states that separate "nationalist" unions have been formed for *chauffeurs*, domestic servants, printers, shop-assistants, and labourers. Although their working motto may be said to be, "Class warfare can wait till race warfare is disposed of", yet it is clear that Communism will still have to be reckoned with, if economic conditions remain as they are—particularly so now that Mohamed Hatta, the brightest star in the native movement and one whose overt nationalism has an appreciable alloy of class-struggle, has returned to Java after completing his studies at the Faculty of Commerce and Economics in Rotterdam and (a *sine qua non*, this) freely associating with European Communists.

The International Aspect. The truth of this assertion is shown by the recent unearthing by the British police of a group of Javanese exiles in Singapore with whom, incidentally, Mohamed Hatta consorted during a recent brief stay there. Led by a Sumatran Malay named Jamaluddin Tamin (himself a fugitive since the rising in 1926), a number of those deported in recent years had set up what they were pleased to call the *Partai Republik Indonesia*. Its headquarters for the South Seas were in Singapore. This body's primary aim is directed, as its name implies, towards the overthrow of Dutch rule in the East Indies, but recent investigations proved conclusively that Jamaluddin Tamin, its founder, had been in direct touch with Tan Malaka who was in Shanghai at the time. His association with a man who was specifically selected for

work in Burma on behalf of the Communist International, must heavily discount Tamin's emphatic protestations that his activities have been in no way anti-British, more especially as there is every reason to believe that his organisation is, in truth, the Dutch East Indies Bureau about which information was obtained in October 1931. The objects of this Bureau were said at that time to be " firstly and foremostly to re-establish the P.K.I. (*Partai Kommunist Indonesia*)," but " secondly, to find ways and means as soon as possible to establish good connections with the F.E.B. (Far Eastern Bureau) and P.P.T.U.S. (Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat)," and " thirdly, to assist in all possible ways similar work done by the C.P.M. (Communist Party of Malaya) in establishing our movement amongst the Malay races." I may be pardoned if I quote once again the words of the French official—" *il n'y a pas une menace particulière annamite, chinoise, javanaise, ou malaise, mais un danger commun pour tous les pays colonisateurs.*"

Tan Malaka. No history of Communism in the Dutch East Indies would be complete which did not take account of Tan Malaka who has been aptly described as " the Roy of Javanese Communism." His history is particularly interesting from an Indian point of view when it is recalled that Chapter 10 mentioned that he was one of the special agents selected by the Far Eastern Bureau for work in Rangoon and Burma. A Malay from the west coast of Sumatra, Tan Malaka, who is at present about thirty-five years of age, was formerly a school-teacher, but he soon attracted so much attention as a virulent propagandist of the Communist creed that he was arrested and sentenced to banishment to one of the more remote portions of the Archipelago. At his own request, however, his sentence was commuted to one of permanent deportation from the Dutch East Indies, and he left for Holland in March 1922. Since then, he has paid several visits to Moscow and there is abundant evidence to show that while he was in Europe he was in close and sympathetic touch with M. N. Roy, whose story will be told at a later stage in this book. In 1924-25 he was at Canton where he held (under Moscow) the posi-

tion of "Propagandist for the Pacific Area", while intercepted correspondence, written partly in a secret code, revealed the fact that in September 1925 he was in Chiangmai, a town in Siam close to the Burma-Siam border, from where he was almost certainly arranging for the establishment of a secret centre in Singapore. Two years later he was deported from Manila to Amoy though it was thought at the time that he would probably return to the Phillipines. He may have done so, because it was not till the beginning of 1931, when he was found to be in hiding in Amoy, that his whereabouts became known in India.

Tan Malaka was educated in Holland, speaks both Dutch and English, and is obviously an intelligent and dangerous type of agitator, the fortuitous discovery of whose plans to visit Burma in Moscow's interest is a matter for no little congratulation. His arrest in Hong Kong on the 10th October 1932, while on his way from Shanghai to Siam to discuss, so he avers, with the leaders of the *Partai Republik Indonesia* whether the time had come for action in the Dutch East Indies, is even more so. His removal from the arena, at the lowest estimate of its value, has deprived Moscow of the services of a man whose influence and exceptional ability the Third International had not been slow to recognise, and of one, moreover, who was playing a leading part in the instigation of anti-Imperialist revolutions in most, if not all, of the colonial countries in the southern seas.

PART THREE.

India's Own Troubles.

CHAPTER 15.

THE BIRTH OF INDIAN COMMUNISM.

Some Early Communist Pronouncements.

The history of Indian Communism is a long one, reaching back to the very early days of the Soviet régime in Russia, when the possibility of attacking England through her eastern possessions, particularly India, was already present in the minds of the Moscow leaders. In December 1918 the wireless stations of the Bolshevik Government broadcast a report of a memorandum handed to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet by an "Indian delegation", in the name of the "Peoples of India". The memorandum called upon the Soviet for assistance and ended with an expression of confidence that the days of England were numbered and that free Russia would stretch out a fraternal hand to oppressed Indians. Wireless messages intercepted a year later spoke of the facts that the Russian Communist Party had decided "to take concrete measures to spread revolution in the East" and that the Third International would establish sections in oriental countries. On the 9th February 1924, Moscow turned her eyes more directly on India, and speaking through Chicherin, proclaimed that 'Future India must stand at the head of the free Eastern Republics'.

Manabendra Nath Roy's Appearance. It was not, however, till 1920 that M. N. Roy, the father of Indian Communism, made his first appearance in Russia. Making a hurried departure from India in 1915, when, as Narendra Nath Bhattacharji, he absconded from bail in a case of terrorist dacoity, Roy visited Shanghai, Java, Sumatra, Batavia, and Japan before making his way to America where he was indicted in the San Francisco Conspiracy Case. He again absconded and crossed the border into Mexico, whence he departed for Europe and Moscow, the scene of his greatest revolutionary achievements. Wherever he has gone Roy has left behind him a trail of anti-British conspiracy and intrigue, and his capture and imprisonment in 1931

(to which allusion will again be made in a later chapter) is an achievement which the police of India may well regard as important.

Roy's Supremacy in Moscow. Roy's history is too well known and has been described in too great detail in Sir David Petrie's *Communism in India 1924-27* to need recapitulation here. He quickly placed himself at the head of a small but extremely virile group of other malcontents who, like himself, found the atmosphere of post-war Berlin and neo-revolutionary Moscow more congenial than that of their native India. The inevitable rivalries, of course, occurred even at this early stage in the proceedings, Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya (Chattarji), who had appeared on the scene several years earlier, being Roy's chief opponent. Roy overcame all opposition, however, and succeeded in securing his own recognition by the Moscow leaders as the spokesman of "Indian Nationalists". It was when the first of Roy's and Chattopadhyaya's following began to drift back to India, the finished products of Moscow's infant Oriental Academy, that Communism first came to India. In the vanguard were Nalini Gupta and Abani Mukharji, who returned to India, the one on Roy's behalf in 1921 and the other in 1923 as an agent of Chattopadhyaya. Both had been members of terrorist organisations in Bengal prior to their departure abroad and both were sent back as Communist emissaries to renew their old acquaintances and to seek from amongst them recruits to the new "ideology". But of these more anon; their history is too engrossing to be dealt with so summarily as the limits of this particular chapter would seem to demand.

The Foundations of Communism in India. Slow to take root in a country where the feudal spirit and hereditary principles are so ingrained as in India, the Bolshevik movement grew no less surely on that account. By 1924 its menace to India's peace and prosperity had become sufficiently serious to necessitate the first important Communist Conspiracy case (I exclude the Peshawar Conspiracy Case of 1923), and in February

of that year a formal plaint was lodged at Cawnpore against a selection of eight (including the absent Roy) of 168 Indian Communists whose names the "brief" of the case contained, the charge being that of conspiring to deprive the King-Emperor of the sovereignty of British India.

The Cawnpore Conspiracy Case, and After.

For various reasons only four were actually brought to trial and convicted, but their removal hit the movement hard, for leaders (even of the calibre of Shaukat Usmani, Shripad Amrit Dange, and Muzaffar Ahmad) were rare in those days. M. N. Roy was still at work abroad, however, having by this time found a place in the Executive Committee of the Communist International, and it soon became clear that Communism had merely been scotched and not killed. In July 1924 (before all the stages of the case had actually been concluded) the Communist International decided to adopt Roy's suggestion that a new Indian Communist Party should be formed as a branch of the Communist International. Three months later, a correspondent to a Calcutta newspaper announced that "in the Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspiracy Case it has been settled that to have faith in Communism in itself is no offence. Thus the fear of the law against Communism has been removed"; while another newspaper announced the open formation of an Indian Communist Party with branches at Madras, Bombay, and Cawnpore, and that "an all-India Communist Conference will be held in three months' time". This, the first conference of its kind, was duly held in the last week of December 1925. So, too, in November 1924, Roy wrote of the Cawnpore Case that it had had good effects as well as bad: "People have got used to hearing things which simply terrified them before. . . . We must reap the benefit of this situation. . . . We must prepare to begin the struggle for the legalisation of our party."

The events of the next few years were to make it very clear that Communism had come to stay, and that nothing short of the collapse of the Soviet system itself would ever eradicate manifestations of sympathy for

that system, at any rate in the urban areas of India. The most that the authorities could hope to do was to mitigate, by constant watchfulness and by judicious and timely action within the narrow limits of the law, the evils and dangers of the preaching of class hatred to those so ill-adapted to receive such doctrines in a thoughtful and discriminatory frame of mind. This was the position at the time of the institution of the Meerut Conspiracy Case in 1929 and still is the position to-day.

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CHAPTER 16.

THE PERIOD OF REGENERATION.

An Estimate of Roy's Early Achievements.

There can hardly be a better exposition of the present Communist policy of turning every subversive movement to its own account than the history of Indian Communism in the years 1924 to 1928, which is roughly the period covered by Sir David Petrie's book already referred to. In summarising the degree of progress achieved during that period, Sir David Petrie showed how utterly bankrupt M. N. Roy had been in the way of practical achievement, and went on to say, at page 315: "It would be quite erroneous, however, to suppose that Roy's singularly barren record can be taken to mean that Communism has obtained no footing whatever in India. For instance, many recent articles in Indian-edited papers could be cited to show that the Press is becoming increasingly alive to the immense power of mass action as a political weapon. Communism, as expounded by Mr. Saklatvala during his recent tour, earned appreciative comment in several quarters which could not all be dismissed as irresponsible. It is hardly to be supposed that such papers accept the doctrines of Communism with their ultimate implications (the reverse is almost certainly true), but it is indisputable that the mass action idea has come to stay, as also the impression that, as this particular weapon broke the dominion of the Tsars in Russia, so it may again be used to win India her freedom from the overlordship of Great Britain. There are many clear evidences also of a growing recognition on the part of the Indian National Congress (and cognate political bodies) of the need of organising the labouring masses in order to associate them with the general movement for the country's political advancement. Then there are the organisation of Workers' and Peasants' Parties, and the growing intrusion into Labour movements of persons working for avowedly Communist purposes. The address of Bhupendra Nath Dutt to the

Political Sufferers' Conference at Gauhati, no less than the association of individual revolutionaries with Communism, could be fittingly quoted to support M. N. Roy's contention that the 'tendency of "going to the masses" is gaining ground among the nationalist intellectuals of advanced views'. The penetration by Communism of indigenous revolutionary movements—notably the Sikh—is also a feature the significance of which it would be dangerous to ignore. All these various manifestations must be regarded as so many symptoms that can be diagnosed in only one particular way."

Doubts of Roy's Ability. To this appreciation, which was written in September 1927, it will be necessary to add a brief description of the events on which it was based and of one or two incidents which were just outside its scope, before proceeding to deal, in another chapter, with the more serious events of the year 1928, which must indubitably be classed as the dangers of which the above appreciation gave warning. It was during the period covered by Sir David Petrie's volume that the Communist International began to realise and correct its previous errors and to place less reliance on M. N. Roy's omniscience and infallibility where Indian affairs were concerned. From 1924 onwards new tactics became clearly discernible in Moscow's handling of the Indian situation. The Communist note in propaganda, where it was likely to offend the native populations, was suppressed, and nationalism was exploited as an unconscious means of furthering Communist aims. It was at this time, too, that the indifferent quality of Roy's Indian agents, practically all of them greedy opportunists lacking in scruples and principles and even in common honesty, began to attract attention at headquarters where demands were made for a greater return for the vast sums of money expended. Although Roy's reply to these demands was to lay impudent claim to such outbreaks as the Moplah rising and the *Aika* movement in the United Provinces as the work of his agents, he did not completely rest the doubts and questionings mentioned, and Zinoviev demanded and obtained the adoption of a scheme "of direct contact between the

Comintern and the proletarian organisations of parties of British India, ignoring the local Communist Party " (and presumably also M. N. Roy, the existing leader).

Changed Tactics—European Supervision.

The orientation of this new policy and the wane of Roy's monopoly of power caused the dispatch to India, in spite of Roy's vehement protests, of the first of a series of British Communist agents in the form of Percy E. Glading *alias* R. Cochrane, of the National Minority Movement. It is true that Glading arrived in India armed with credentials from M. N. Roy, but the disparaging report on Communism in India which he rendered on his return makes it very clear that he was by no means an agent of Roy. He was followed by George Allison *alias* Donald Campbell, a prominent member of the British Communist Party, who arrived in Bombay in April 1926. Allison had visited Moscow in 1924 and had remained there till July 1925, and was sent to India "to develop the Left Wing inside the Trade Union Congress" but "to keep out of party politics except in an advisory capacity if necessary". This latter he failed to do and the prominent part which he took in Labour affairs in Bombay and Bengal eventually led to his discovery and apprehension in November 1926 and his subsequent prosecution and conviction on charges of using as genuine a forged document and of having counterfeited the seal and stamp of the London Foreign Office on his passport. He was sentenced to eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment in all, and was deported on the expiry of his sentence. It is of some interest that he was again sentenced at the Winchester Assizes in November 1931 to three years' penal servitude for attempting to provoke mutiny in His Majesty's Navy.

Spratt, Bradley, and Hutchinson. His place was taken by Phillip Spratt who arrived in India in December 1926, ostensibly on behalf of a firm of booksellers but in reality to open in India a Labour Publishing House through which Soviet money could be received and distributed. In actual fact, he took up the work which Allison had compulsorily abandoned, and, indus-

trious and capable Communist that he was, gave the Indian group not only the benefit of his advice and experience, but, what was just as important, a not inconsiderable amount of financial assistance. Spratt was joined in September 1927 by Benjamin Francis Bradley, also a capable and devoted worker, who took a similar active part in the organisation of the Workers' and Peasants' Party and in work amongst the employees of the cotton mills and the railways. The last of this almost unbroken chain of foreign agents was a man of less forceful character, Hugh Lester Hutchinson, who came to Bombay in September 1928 after a short sojourn in Berlin where he came into close contact with Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya. Soon after his arrival in Bombay he became involved in the Communist movement there, but his weakness of character and his dalliance with Chattopadhyaya's sister, the Communistically-minded Mrs. Suhasini Nambiar, rendered largely innocuous any harm that his upbringing (his mother is to this day a rabid member of the Communist Party in Manchester) might have caused him to attempt to do.

Other Foreign Agents. Before leaving this subject, it would be as well to refer to two other foreign Communist agents who visited India at the end of 1928 when the flood-tide of Communism was at its height. Each sought to help the furtherance of Moscow's aims, but fortunately neither was allowed to remain in India long enough to do any great harm. The first was J. F. Ryan, an important member of the Communist Party of Australia and the then chairman of the New South Wales Trade and Labour Councils. He arrived in India on the 18th November 1928, after attending a meeting of the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat in Shanghai. The importance of this latter body will be evident to those who have read Chapter 10 of this book. His mission was to attend the annual session of the All-India Trades-Union Congress at Jharia on the 22nd December 1928, in order to secure the affiliation of that body to the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat and thus to link up the fight against Imperialism in India with that in the Far East. This he failed to do though his speech at the

Congress created a very favourable impression. The other was J. W. Johnstone, an American emissary of Chattopadhyaya's newly-formed Berlin organisation, the League Against Imperialism, who was sent on a similar mission on the League's behalf. He had freely associated with Spratt, Muzaffar Ahmed, and other well-known Indian Communists and had delivered several most objectionable speeches before he was arrested and deported with his mission fulfilled. The brief appearance of these two minor actors on the Indian political stage would not have been worth mentioning were it not for the impression which they gave of the interest caused beyond the seas by the dawn of Indian Communism. There can be no doubt that this impression, coupled with numerous expressions of sympathy, some verbal and some in the more solid form of monetary assistance, raised the Indian Communists in their own estimation and provided a source of inspiration for further and greater efforts.

Indian Leadership. Meanwhile, the four original conspirators had been released from Cawnpore jail, three at least of them (Muzaffar Ahmed, Dange and Shaikat Usmani) to resume old friendships, to revive old associations, and to take up the threads where the Cawnpore Case had broken them. Meanwhile, too, Moscow's Eastern academies had not been idle and their output had produced in India a new generation of Communist leaders, each with his following, some more, some less, but none inconsiderable.

CHAPTER 17.

THE APPROACH TO MEERUT.

The Success of the New Methods. By the autumn of 1927, therefore, the Indian Communist Party had replenished its stock of leaders. The stage was thus set for the fight ahead and an attempt will now be made to show how, after the comparative failure of M. N. Roy's organisation to achieve any tangible results, the new methods met with surprising success and brought about an upheaval in the chief industrial centres in India. The combined (though not necessarily co-related, for internecine jealousies still persisted to some extent) efforts of all the elements described in the previous chapter produced a remarkable and rapid increase in Communist influence in Labour circles generally and in the trades-union movement in particular. By April 1928, the penetration of the trades-union movement was so complete that the extremists, as represented by the Workers' and Peasants' Parties, had not only secured a voice in the control of the movement, but had gained—particularly in Bombay—a distinct hold over the workers themselves. The influence of the moderate element decreased in proportion until, before the end of the year, control had passed almost entirely into extremist hands. (Indeed, "control" is hardly the appropriate word, for the Communist leaders had, by their reckless advocacy of the doctrines of Lenin, soon brought into being forces which they were quite incapable of controlling). Communism had become more to India than the wordy vapourings of a few unbalanced semi-intellectuals whose influence for evil was exceedingly small. The oft-reiterated policy—"First disturb the masses' placid contentment and then inculcate the principles of Communism"—was being pursued with vigour under the able guidance alike of foreign emissaries and trained indigenous workers.

Communism in Operation. When, therefore, discontent reared its head amongst the cotton workers

in Bombay at the beginning of 1928 and amongst the railway employees at Lillooah a few weeks later, the Workers' and Peasants' Parties were able to take full and speedy advantage of the opportunities so presented. Three years' Communist theory was rapidly translated into practice, first in Bombay, then in Bengal, and later, to a lesser extent, in Upper India, until it became evident that a handful of agitators had succeeded in temporarily paralysing essential services and important industries to the serious inconvenience, if not actual danger, of the law-abiding population of the areas affected. Riots became the order of the day; savage onslaughts were several times made upon the police; loyal workers were terrorised into submission by stray assaults and by threats of starvation; frenzied attacks were made upon property; and every effort was made, both by speeches and by printed propaganda, to stir up hatred, not only against the servants of the Crown, but also against the employers of labour, the landowners and the money-lenders. As the campaign progressed, Phillip Spratt, in earnest pursuance of the avowed policy of the Communist International—the creation of internal unrest as a preliminary to the “workers' revolution”—sought other fields to conquer. Having failed to turn to good account some alleged grievances of the Mymensingh peasantry, he enlisted the assistance of Sohan Singh Josh in an attempt to plant the seeds of revolt in the Punjab. In this he was hardly more successful, though a Peasants' and Workers' Party was formed in that province which passed a number of objectionable resolutions, some of which contained an exhortation to the public to refuse to pay land revenue and canal-water rates, while, at the Party conference which was held in Lyallpur in the autumn of 1928, Communist doctrines were proclaimed with greater candour than on any previous public occasion. It was Spratt's untiring energy, too, that brought into being two Workers' and Peasants' Parties in the United Provinces which held their inaugural conferences, one at Jhansi and the other at Meerut in October 1928. At both places the speeches were extremely objectionable,

and at Meerut Spratt himself openly preached direct action against the landlords and the Government.

Some Results. By the end of 1928, therefore, hardly a single public utility service or industry remained which had not been affected by the wave of Communism which swept the country during the year. Transport, industrial and agricultural workers of every description, policemen, colliers and even scavengers were all subjected to, and many fell under, the baneful influence of this whirlwind propaganda campaign which promised them the sweets of revolution if they would but raise their hands to grasp them. Even youths of all classes were to be harnessed to the Communist car of destruction and a network of study classes made its appearance alongside the shop and factory committees which the campaign had brought into being. To this particular part of the campaign Jawahar Lal Nehru, the son of the veteran Congress worker, the late Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, lent a ready hand. Speaking at the Bombay Presidency Youth Conference in Poona at the end of 1928, he said: "We must aim at the destruction of all Imperialism and the reconstruction of society on another basis. That basis must be one of co-operation which is another name for Socialism. Our national ideal must, therefore, be the establishment of a co-operative Socialist Commonwealth and our international ideal a world federation of Socialist States. The voice that claims freedom must be the voice of revolt. When that voice is raised, England will bow to the inevitable."

The Effect on the Indian National Congress.

Such words from a prominent Congressman were, unfortunately, typical of the general attitude of Congress workers of the day. The session of the All-India National Congress, which was convened in Calcutta in December 1928, reflected this pandering spirit. More than in any previous Congress, the Calcutta gathering showed an anxiety to placate the Labour extremists. Resolutions were passed condemning the Public Safety Bill and the Trades' Disputes Bill, which were then on the legislative anvil, and it was decided that the Con-

gress should take up the organisation of the workers and peasants as a part of its future programme of constructive work for non-co-operation. Some Communists even secured places on the All-India Congress Committee, and it is significant that the Communist group in Bombay was remarkably successful in the municipal elections. While the Congress was sitting, a huge demonstration of some 30,000 labourers marched in procession with red banners and took possession of the enclosure in spite of the protests of the Congress leaders. The labourers held a demonstration which lasted for over an hour before they were finally induced to depart. That such an incident could have occurred is an indication of the enormous increase in the influence and powers of organisation of the working classes.

The Effect on the Communists Themselves.

The degree of confidence which Indian Communists derived from the events of 1928 is well demonstrated by the proceedings of the first Conference of the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party held in Calcutta at the end of the year. Prior to the conference the Party had, as a whole, been working under a cloak, its policy and intentions being merely to permeate the ranks of the more important organisations. In Calcutta, however, it took up a defiant line of attack. In order to prepare the peasants for revolution, the Party would place before them a programme of their immediate needs of life. For the workers there would be a policy of strengthening the trades-union movement by all means on the basis of forward economic and political demands and by resort to "direct action". All occasions were to be seized to draw the workers into political action by demonstrative means, strikes, etc. While acknowledging the utility of non-violence, the party made no fetish of it, though it acknowledged that the methods of secret preparation for an armed uprising were quite useless in conditions in India as they then were. In short, the party's immediate objective, as revealed at these meetings, was the creation of an aggressive mentality among the workers, the peasants

and the petty *bourgeoisie* with a view to bringing about a revolution, first of a political and then of a social and economic kind.

Even when the usual allowances are made for the excessive exuberance which such occasions engender, there is still no doubt that a year's successful work, coupled with a lavish display of foreign interest, had enormously increased the prestige and confidence of the Communist Party of India and had encouraged them to make still further efforts in pursuit of their goal. Four years later, a Communist paper published in England contained the following note:—"During the strike struggles of 1928-29 the workers of India emerged as a political force, a development of immense significance, and took an active part in the nation-wide struggle for independence. A new milestone was thus reached: the workers had realised for the first time their revolutionary role among the various forces for national emancipation".

CHAPTER 18.

THE MEERUT CONSPIRACY CASE.

Preliminaries. On the 20th March 1929, thirty-one of the more important leaders in India at the time, including Spratt, Bradley, Muzaffar Ahmad, Shaukat Usmani, and Dange, were arrested in different parts of the country and charged with conspiring to deprive the King Emperor of the sovereignty of British India. Hutchinson was arrested a few weeks later and his name added to the list of those to be prosecuted. The charges made on behalf of the Crown were supported by a vast mass of documentary evidence the like of which had probably never been handled in a single case in the whole history of Indian legal practice. For the very comprehensive search operations, which were carried out simultaneously prior to the institution of the case, had been productive of every conceivable form of concomitant to an open campaign backed by a secret organisation. Communist books and papers, leaflets and other literature, letters couched in cryptic terms or written in invisible ink, plans of campaign, and codes and ciphers for use in communication with agencies in foreign lands, were amongst the documents seized and later exhibited before the courts.

A Summary of the Charges. I do not propose to take my readers through the intricate ramifications of this extremely involved case, which embraces a large variety of personalities and organisations and which has only just been brought to a successful conclusion at the time when I write. It is, in fact, my intention to do no more than give a bird's-eye view of the charges made by the Crown before two successive courts, the one of preliminary inquiry and the other of sessions. My object can best be achieved by quoting from the concluding lines of the findings of the lower court, which finished its hearing of the case on the 14th January 1930. "I may now sum up the case", this court's committal order concludes. "It has been definitely

proved that (1) the Communist International was founded in 1919, with its headquarters at Moscow, as the supreme head of all Communist organisations throughout the world; (2) its chief aim is to establish workers' republics in every country; (3) for this purpose it has as its fixed policy the exciting of violent revolution in all countries; (4) in particular, it has turned its attention to India and determined to cause a revolution which has for its immediate object the overthrow of the sovereignty of the King Emperor in British India; (5) with this object it has formed a conspiracy with persons and bodies in Europe and India and elsewhere to excite the Indian workers and peasants to revolution; (6) these persons and bodies, whom I may call conspirators, have laid down a general plan of campaign under the direction of the Communist International; (7) this plan includes the formation of such bodies as a Communist Party of India and Workers' and Peasants' Parties; (8) the immediate work of these parties is to gain control of the working classes by organising them in unions, teaching them the principles of Communism, inciting them to strikes in order to educate them and teach them solidarity, and in every way to use every possible method of propaganda and instruction; (9) the workers are thus to be taught mass organisation with a view to the declaration of a general strike, followed by revolution; (10) the peasants are to be organised in a similar manner so as to form an effective reserve force for the proletarian masses and to effect an agrarian revolution; (11) in pursuance of these aims a Communist Party of India and four Workers' and Peasants' Parties in Bombay, Bengal, the Punjab, and the United Provinces were formed; (12) these bodies were given financial aid from Moscow, and their policy was dictated from Moscow, directly and via England and the Continent, through communications conducted in a secret and conspiratorial manner; (13) in addition to this several persons, such as Allison, Spratt and Bradley, were sent out to India for the express purpose of organising the work and fomenting revolution; (14) in pursuance of the directions, and with the financial

help thus obtained, these bodies have organised unions, conducted demonstrations, edited papers, instituted youth movements, initiated and conducted strikes, and used all possible methods of propaganda; (15) their express aim in all those activities has been to overthrow the sovereignty of the King in British India, with a view to the establishment of a Socialist State under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the supreme command of the Communist International; (16) in these activities all the accused, with the exception of Dharamvir Singh, are shown to have taken part with full knowledge and approval of their aims and objects and directly or indirectly in league with the conspirators outside India; (17) they therefore formed part of the conspiracy to deprive the King Emperor of his sovereignty of British India and are therefore liable to be tried under section 121-A, I. P. C."

The Sentences. The Additional Sessions Judge, who then took up the hearing of the case on the 30th January 1930, pronounced judgment on the 16th January 1933, sentencing all but four of the thirty-one accused to varying terms of transportation and rigorous imprisonment. One, D. R. Thengdi, had died some four months previously whilst on bail in Poona and three Bengalis were acquitted. Of the persons with whom this book is particularly concerned, Muzaffar Ahmad (of the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case) was sentenced to transportation for life, S. A. Dange (also convicted at Cawnpore in 1924) and Phillip Spratt to twelve years' transportation, B. F. Bradley and Shaukat Usmani (a third of the Cawnpore conspirators) to ten years' transportation, Sohan Singh Josh (Spratt's agent in the Punjab) and Dharani Goswami (who will make his first appearance in Chapter 20) to seven years' transportation, while Gopen Chakravarty (who also figures prominently in Chapter 20) and Lester Hutchinson were sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of four years. Chapter 19 will show how Amir Haidar Khan, an absconding accused in this case, was laid by the heels in Madras during 1932 and sentenced to an aggregate of thirty months' rigorous imprisonment.

The Scope of the Conspiracy. In the course of a judgment consisting of close on seven hundred printed foolscap pages the Sessions Judge found that the Communist International in Russia aimed at bringing about a revolution or revolutions for the overthrow of existing governments by means of armed risings and the establishment of Soviet republics in their place; that India had been selected as a suitable field for their operations and as being one of the most likely places for the next step forward for the world revolution; that the methods included the incitement of antagonism between capital and labour and the creation and development of organisations, superficially for the benefit of their members, but in reality worked for the purpose of promoting the Communist programme; and that the twenty-seven persons whom he later convicted had taken part, together with others not brought before his court, in this conspiracy which aimed at depriving the King of the sovereignty of British India.

Outside Assistance. On the subject of those who were not produced before him—and they included M. N. Roy, Khushi Muhammad *alias* Muhammad Ali *alias* Sepassi, George Allison *alias* Donald Campbell, J. F. Ryan (the Australian Communist), Clemens Palme Dutt and Shapurji Saklatvala (whose names will appear in Chapter 20), the late R. C. L. Sharma of Pondicherry notoriety, and V. N. Chattopadhyaya amongst some fifty others—the Judge has written:—“I am quite satisfied that all these persons are in one way or another linked with this conspiracy along with many other persons whose names will be found scattered here and there through the record and through this judgment. These persons were all rightly described by the prosecution at an early stage in this case as co-conspirators, and there can be no doubt that the same description can very correctly be applied to the absconding accused Amir Haidar Khan and the late D. R. Thengdi accused who has died during the period of five months which the writing of this judgment has taken. In addition to these individuals there are also certain organisations,

in regard to which it is proved either that they have taken part in this conspiracy as organisations, or that the persons who controlled them have used them for conspiratorial purposes. Such organisations are the Communist International and its affiliated bodies, the Krestintern or Peasants' International, the Red International of Labour Unions or R.I.L.U., the Communist Party of Great Britain, the National Minority Movement, the Workers' Welfare League of India, the Labour Research Department, the Young Communist League of Great Britain, the Indian Seamen's Union, the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat and, last but by no means least, the League Against Imperialism."

The Value of the Case. A high official of the Government of India has written of the judgment that "it is satisfactory that by this decision a conspiracy, fraught with the gravest dangers to the well-being of India, has been stopped at an early stage; it is even more important that it has been held that these activities, which might be regarded by some as harmless or even beneficial, have been revealed in their true light as an attempt to overthrow by revolutionary methods the Government established by law in India". In all humility I say that, if hereafter those views find general acceptance in India and elsewhere in the colonial East, my labours will have been amply rewarded.

The Duration of the Trial. Charges of all kinds have often been levelled against the authorities in India in connection with the Meerut case, the protracted course of which has also caused unfavourable comment in circles wholly unconnected with Communism but at the same time unfamiliar with Indian law. It may, therefore, serve a useful purpose at a time when judgment has just been delivered and when things may be seen in truer perspective than when the issues are clouded by day-to-day occurrences, to subject these charges to a brief examination. Before doing so, I will take leave to quote a short extract from a letter written by M. N. Roy shortly after the conclusion of the Cawn-

pore Conspiracy Case in 1924. I do so because it throws light on the frame of mind in which Moscow's followers go (and, it is to be feared, always will go) to their trial:—"The news about the result of the Cawnpore case", Roy wrote in November 1924, "reached us yesterday. We had not expected any better. Poor fellows! If they could only have put up a better defence, four years in jail would have been worth while. We must have better Communists than this lot; and the defending Councils (*sic*). By God what fools! . . . With a better lot in the dock and less stupid heads at the Bar, the Cawnpore case could have been made an epoch-making event in our political history." The Meerut prisoners have, it must be admitted, extracted (so far as foreign countries are concerned) more of advertisement and political capital from their trial than did their predecessors at Cawnpore, or, indeed, than Roy, himself arraigned at Cawnpore in 1931, was able to do. The voluminous discourses on Communist theory and principles (much of them irrelevant to the charges framed) which took the place of statements of defence were published in book form for sale in England or anywhere else where people could be found to read them. Jail conditions, which the accused themselves have many times applauded in their letters to their friends, inspired a continual stream of entirely misleading press articles, while the length of the case has always stood Communist editors in good stead. The proceedings have undoubtedly been lengthy but so have similar cases elsewhere. The French and the practical Japanese, to quote only two instances, took two and three years, respectively, to dispose of cases of almost identical dimensions. When to the masses of evidence adduced is added the cumbrous nature of the Indian law, which, in its effort to prevent injustice, places all the cards in the hands of the accused, and to this is superadded the determination of those accused to extract from the trial the maximum of advertisement for themselves and their doctrines, it may be considered fortunate that a case of such magnitude should have been concluded within four years of the date of its inception.

CHAPTER 19.

THE PERIOD OF DEGENERATION.

A Blow at Communism. Sufficient justification for the institution of what was to prove an extremely wearisome and protracted criminal case lies in the fact that the removal of the thirty leading Communist agitators from the political arena was immediately followed by a marked improvement in the industrial situation. There can be no doubt whatsoever that the arrests and searches which led up to the Meerut Conspiracy case placed the authorities on top and created a vacuum in the leadership of the movement which was filled by very inferior material. Those whom force of circumstances pressed to the top were possessed of an organisational capacity, an honesty of purpose, and a mental calibre very much below that with which most of the Meerut prisoners were endowed. There were many to claim that the mantle of Spratt had fallen upon them, but none whom it fitted or became. In the face of the rivalries and petty squabbles which this state of affairs brought about, and in spite of exhortations from Moscow itself to establish an "Indian Soviet Republic" and to organise for the "approaching gigantic revolutionary fights", the Communist Party of India (or, it would be more correct to say, the various Communist organisations in India which Spratt had temporarily welded together) has (or have) never been able to recover even a tithe of the power and prestige which belonged to the followers of Moscow's doctrines prior to March 1929. It was some time, indeed, before those who were left did anything at all towards rebuilding the system which had been the fruits of months of unremitting toil by capable and experienced workers, and which had been shattered by the seizure of all the important records prior to the Meerut case. Had merely the leaders been removed and the system remained intact, much harm might still have been done. As things turned out, a prominent Calcutta Communist was forced to admit that "from June 1929 to October 1929 the time was very bad with us". In actual fact, the only practical event of any importance during the

whole of 1929 was a short-lived strike in the Bombay textile mills which the *Girni Kamgar* Union brought about at the end of April.

A Peaceful Year. The year 1929 was, therefore, practically entirely free from both constructive reorganisation of Communist institutions and destructive meddling in Labour affairs, and a period of industrial peace prevailed which seemed the greater by contrast with the serious unrest which had gone before. The passage of the Trades Disputes Act through the Assembly served as something of a deterrent to those who sought to exploit industrial disputes, and the Public Safety Ordinance (while it lasted) gave pause to Moscow seriously to consider the expediency of sending foreign agents to India to take the places of Spratt and Bradley. Moreover, the inevitable revelations of police methods of counter-attack, which were made in the course of evidence in open court at Meerut, showed Communists in India and abroad that their system of communication with each other needed radical and sweeping changes. These problems and others attendant on them needed serious thought and study by leading Communists, and to the various impediments to successful reorganisation mentioned above there was added another—the lack of outside direction.

Signs of Revival. Towards the close of the year, however, the first signs of a possible recrudescence of the Communist movement were noticed. The shadow of Meerut had by this time grown less opaque; the Public Safety Ordinance had been withdrawn in response to so-called “popular” clamour; and closer acquaintance with the Trades Disputes Act had shown that it was less fearsome in operation than from its form appeared. At the annual session of the All-India Trades-Union Congress, held at Nagpur in December 1929, therefore, speeches were made and resolutions passed which made it very clear that Communism had merely been scotched and not killed.

The Nagpur Congress. The Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat, the Workers’ Welfare League of India, and the League Against Imperialism—all three Communist organisations—made bids for the allegiance

of the Congress and the two latter were in some measure successful. Though the Congress was sharply divided on the question of Communism, enough was said there to show that this professedly trades-unionist body was rapidly and surely passing under the control of Moscow, and the formation of most of the saner elements into a rival organisation, known as the Trades-Union Federation, gave a still freer hand to the Communist element. Encouraged by these signs, Communism, under the guidance mainly of S. V. Deshpande and Mrs. Suhasini Nambiar in Bombay and Abdul Halim in Calcutta, again began to rear its head. Early in February 1930, there began a widespread strike on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. There is no evidence that the Communists were actually responsible for this strike, but they undoubtedly encouraged it and they lost no time in taking part in it, while sparing no pains to foster the spirit of unrest which it called forth. Shortly afterwards, a serious riot occurred in Calcutta, as a direct result of Communist incitement of the bullock-cart drivers there against new legislation which affected them. This was later acclaimed by the official Communist press as the first "barricade street fight with the police in India" --which indeed it was.

Civil Disobedience as Moscow's Opportunity. Though Moscow's attitude towards Mr. Gandhi and the Congress has latterly been one of unremitting and continuous hostility, there is not the slightest doubt that Communists, both in India and abroad, watched the first civil disobedience movement with constant interest in order that they might usurp control of the situation in the country so soon as it had sufficiently matured to meet their ends. It is very much of a moot point whether they could ever have done so with the limited resources at their disposal, but the fact remains that their programme in 1930 was to conduct intensive propaganda amongst the peasants, the transport and metal workers, and the troops; to form, arm, and train bodies of young workers to resist the attacks of the police and to destroy capitalist buildings when the opportunity arose; and to win over to their side the existing youth organisations in the country.

Some False Claims. This programme was to be carried out in preparation for the day when the situation which the Congress was creating should pass beyond Mr. Gandhi's control. It is, perhaps, significant that in three outstanding cases in which the civil disobedience movement brought serious disorders in its train—in Sholapur, in Kishoreganj, and in Buldana—no trace of Communist complicity was discernible. In each case, however, Moscow's official propagandists, misled possibly by advices from Indian Communists, claimed the riots which occurred as a success on the part of the Communist Party of India.

S. V. Deshpande's Downfall. As time went by the Communists in India seemed to be growing more and more impotent. Many of the leaders (including S. V. Deshpande and Abdul Halim) had served short terms of imprisonment on one charge or another and, on return, had shown a marked inclination to keep within the law and to do no more than was necessary to retain their nominal leadership. Of Halim it has been written by a member of his party, that "none knows why he does not work hard for his principles and in the masses; when he is asked to work he replies that he has no funds". By the end of 1930, Deshpande had drifted from a proposal to start an "All-India Communist Party" to the formation of an Indian branch of the League Against Imperialism and a Marxian Students' Club. Neither of these ventures proved a success. His papers, the *Workers' Weekly* and the *Kranti*, both published along with numerous pamphlets in Bombay, contained more of vague fulminations than of tangible revolutionary schemes. As Secretary of the All-India Trades-Union Congress, the Communist wing of the original organisation of that name, which had split at Nagpur in 1929, he incurred considerable unpopularity by his decision not to hold the annual session in Bombay in February 1931 as had been arranged. It was eventually held in Calcutta in the following July and the proceedings confirmed Deshpande's worst fears that he might be thrown out of power. The Congress broke up in disorder; Deshpande's party left the meeting; and each side thereafter claimed to be the All-India Trades-

Union Congress and elected its own office-bearers. This disorderly session came as a suitable climax to all the disruptive tendencies which had been at work since March 1929 and which had split the Communist movement in India into numerous small units, each at slight variance with the other, and many claiming direct descent from the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party and direct relations with the Communist International. (It will serve no useful purpose to give the names of even a few of the most important, for the groupings are changing with such rapidity that what is written to-day may well prove incorrect to-morrow.) Which, if any, is entitled to the latter claim, it is not a little difficult to say. The probability is that the Comintern, wise by past experience, welcomes all but binds itself to none; for there is no doubt that, could Moscow provide the cohesive influence of another such as Phillip Spratt, she would mould many of these warring groups into one dangerous and formidable entity.

M. N. Roy's Reappearance. Chief amongst the rival parties, however, was that sponsored by M. N. Roy whose reappearance on the scene Moscow can hardly have welcomed. Chapter 16 spoke of the wane of Roy's influence at headquarters, and it will be convenient here to summarise his history in the years which immediately followed his fall from grace. After his removal from the Executive Committee of the Communist International in 1928 and his subsequent expulsion from membership of the International in 1929, Roy determined that he would build up a party of his own which would attempt to capture the Indian Communist movement and enable him to make his own terms with the Moscow leaders. His first move in this endeavour was to join the Brandler-Thalheimer Opposition Communist Group in Germany, a party of no great influence either in numbers or wealth, but of sufficient importance to give him at least an official standing. Rallying round him in Berlin a few Indian enthusiasts in an abortive attempt to start a Berlin branch of the Indian National Congress, he sent two of them, Tayab Ali Shaikh and Sundar Kabadi, both of Bombay, to India in the summer of 1930 as his advance agents. They took with them a manifesto addressed to

the "Revolutionary Vanguard of the Toiling Masses of India", in which Roy made clear his disagreement with the policy of the "official" Communist Party, which, in his view, had been drifting further and further away from the ideals of Lenin: "While rejecting the discredited road of formal parliamentary democracy," a part of it ran, "the Communist Party cannot advocate that India will immediately be a Soviet Republic. That will be running after a Utopia. The Soviet State is the organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The conditions in India are not at all ripe for such a State. The revolutionary State must be based upon all the oppressed and exploited classes. . . . The task of the pioneer group is to get in touch with all concerned with the interests of the toiling masses and with those sympathetic to Communism. The workers becoming class conscious cannot be expected to join the Communist Party if it is organised only with a maximum programme which appears to have little relation to prevailing conditions. They must be shown that the solution of the problems actually before them concerning the minimum demands of the toiling masses come within the purview of the Communist Party. There is no other way to free an essentially revolutionary movement for national independence from leadership of the bourgeoisie. . . . In India the way to Communism lies through the national revolution. . . . To this end it (the Communist Party) must work through the national mass organisations—the National Congress, Youth Leagues, students' organisations, and volunteer corps."

The Reception of Roy's Doctrines. The dissemination in India of propaganda on these lines by Roy's agents very quickly had its effect on a movement which had scarcely recovered from the effects of the Meerut case, and, in an incredibly short space of time Roy's two lieutenants advanced by a series of bounds from one vantage point to another, from the Congress in Bombay through the Youth League to the *Girni Kamgar* Union, which they captured early in 1931 to the extreme discomfiture of S. V. Deshpande, the head of the "official" Communist Party whose preserve it had been hitherto. Deshpande's position was still

further embarrassed by the surreptitious arrival in December 1930 of M. N. Roy himself, travelling from Germany on a stolen passport. Working from behind the scenes, he succeeded in circulating an amazing amount of literature, including his new organ, the *Masses*, the counterpart of his earlier production *The Masses of India*, to which references will be found in Sir David Petrie's book. A new programme issued by Roy differed but little from his earlier pronouncements with the important exception that it was couched in more moderate terms and its phraseology was such as to frighten neither the constitutional trades-unionists nor those advocates of peasant reform who hold the methods of Moscow in abhorrence. In the field of trades-unionism Roy encountered not inconsiderable difficulties. There was no longer the same inflammable material to hand as had existed at an earlier period, and the trades-union movement in India was, and still is, in the hands of a small coterie whose intentions past experience had taught the workers to view with considerable suspicion. Roy, however, was no shirker and there is no doubt that he set his hand most energetically to the performance of that part of his task which centred round the combination and penetration of the most virile trades-union organisations.

Introspective Criticism. An appreciation of the situation by M. N. Roy at this time, which appeared in *Gegen den Strom*, the organ of the German Communist Opposition, of the 14th February 1931 is of interest—the more so because it is a shrewd appreciation of things as they really were. In the course of this article Roy said that, despite the claims of the Communist International, very little progress had been made with the organisation of a Communist Party of India. The ultra-left tactics which had been employed had destroyed many mass organisations which had been organised under Communist leadership. The *Girni Kamgar* Union's membership had fallen from 80,000 to 1,000; other trades-unions were in similar case. The "official" communists were as generals without an army; by faulty leadership they had thoroughly disorganised and demoralised such following as had been theirs. He

had, therefore, considered it his duty to issue a manifesto setting forth a platform. He did not propose the organisation of a second Communist Party independent of the Communist International as he believed that the Communist Party of India must be a section of the Communist International, but such an organisation could never be built up as a mass organisation unless it abandoned the false line of action recommended by the present Communist International. In reporting to the German Communist Opposition leaders Roy stated that the official Communist Party in India counted for nothing and did not exist outside Bombay and Calcutta. It was composed of students and was more in the nature of a study group. In only one union of railwaymen had it any influence. It advocated the generally correct agrarian programme but could accomplish nothing practical having no connection with the villages. What it had organisationally had been completely won over by his own party.

More Widespread Efforts. Having secured a substantial footing in Bombay, Roy turned his attention elsewhere and the month of March 1931 saw him touring the United Provinces prior to proceeding to Karachi to attend, at Jawahar Lal Nehru's invitation, the annual session of the Indian National Congress at the end of the month. (It is of no small importance that the "Declaration of Fundamental Rights" of which the Karachi Congress approved at Nehru's instance is, in many respects, the minimum programme which Roy had advocated in Bombay a few weeks previously). His efforts in those provinces were attended with a considerable measure of success, and it seems quite possible that it was due to the spadework which Roy put in both before and after his visit to Karachi that Jawahar Lal decided to launch his "no-tax" campaign at the end of November 1931. Although it is impossible to say, even after this lapse of time, how far he succeeded in impregnating Congress workers in that area with his views, yet it is known that he was behind the Central Peasants' League which was working on lines parallel to those of the Congress and that the League's efforts were attended with a considerable measure of success in certain areas.

In the *Revolutionary Age* of New York, Roy wrote (from Bombay in April 1931): "All the political activities of the country are taking place on the background of a severe agrarian crisis which is driving the peasant masses to revolt. The Congress utilised this factor as the decisive weapon in its bargain with imperialism. Having made the compromise, it wanted to check the peasant revolt. Indeed, fear of the menacing forces of peasant revolt obliged the Congress to seek compromise with imperialism on the terms of complete capitulation. The peasant revolt, however, is not to be controlled. It still develops under the flag of the Congress, but defies all its frantic efforts to keep it under control. We are taking advantage of this transition stage for capturing the leadership of the movement. Active leaders in the villages still remain faithful Congressmen but are driven by circumstances to disregard the ideology and policy of the Congress. They were all confused when the Congress called off the no-tax campaign. In view of the conditions of the peasantry, they know that the movement cannot be called off. Still, they are not yet ready to revolt against the Congress leadership. We have, therefore, provided them with a programme of immediate action which does not directly conflict with the Congress policy; but it is sure to intensify class struggle in the villages. The result will be that those working on the spot will be forced to break away from the Congress leadership unless they prefer to oppose the peasants openly, which they will not dare to do."

It is interesting to observe in this connection that Kandalkar, one of the leaders of the Bombay section of Roy's party, wrote to his friends in Germany in December 1932, that "there is a growing disillusionment amongst the rank and file of the Congress. We are making all efforts to intensify this discontent and to lead it into fruitful channels". It is not at present possible accurately to gauge the measure of the success of these efforts, but it may be mentioned that the trend of present events indicates that they will not go altogether unrewarded.

Roy's Failure in the Punjab. In the Punjab Roy met with no success and his overtures elicited a

point-blank refusal of co-operation with his party. But the failure of Roy's efforts in this direction must be attributed more to his own arrest than to anything else. Had he had time to do so, he would undoubtedly have returned to the attack and have endeavoured to penetrate the *Kirti-Kisan* organisation whose Communist proclivities are dealt with in a separate chapter. As it was, he made efforts to capture by devious means another Punjabi revolutionary organisation which was ready to hand—the *Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha*. Essentially an upper India growth which has failed to take root in down-country places where attempts have been made to plant it, the *Sabha* is a Communist organisation in all but name. Its emblems bear the hammer and sickle, its preachings are but a slightly diluted form of Bolshevism and its connection with the openly Communist *Kirti-Kisan Sabha* is no longer a matter for surmise. The efforts of M. N. Roy's party to penetrate and control the Bombay branch of this very congenial organisation may, therefore, justifiably be interpreted as an attempt to extend the party's influence to the otherwise inaccessible Punjab.

Roy's Arrest and Conviction. Roy did not himself go to Calcutta but he attempted through his agents, whose number had by that time been considerably augmented, to capture the All-India Trades-Union Congress which was held there in July 1931. His party secured the valuable support of Subhas Chandra Bose, the president, and succeeded in carrying the day against S. V. Deshpande, whose disgruntled departure from the meeting has already been mentioned. Roy then decided to woo the more genuine trades-unionists who, since the Nagpur Congress in 1929, constituted the All-India Trades-Union Federation and the All-India Railway-men's Federation. After the meeting, the General Secretary, elected by Subhas Bose's majority group, issued a statement to the effect that the ultra-left group which had provoked the split at Nagpur in 1929 had itself seceded from the Congress and that there was no longer any reason why the unions which had seceded at Nagpur should not return to the original platform and thereby remove "the last obstacle to the way to unity".

“ The All-India Trades-Union Congress ”, the statement proceeded, “ should not officially be bound by any shade of political opinion. Its members collectively and individually shall have the freedom to hold any political view or belong to any political party, so long as they accept the basic principles of trades-unionism.” The All-India Trades-Union Congress announced that it had appointed a committee to consider a “ Platform of Unity ” submitted by the *Girni Kamgar* Union. Shortly after this appeal was issued, Roy’s whereabouts were at last discovered and he was arrested by the Bombay police, prosecuted in Cawnpore in the original Communist Conspiracy Case (1924) in which he was shown in Chapter 15 to be an absconder, and sentenced to twelve years’ transportation on the 9th January 1932. There is no gainsaying the fact that, in the seven months during which he was at large in India, Roy did very considerable mischief, despite the fact that the police were continually hot on his heels. His doctrines gained many adherents in Bombay and the United Provinces, and at a later date also in Calcutta and its environs. He made serious endeavours to impregnate the Congress with his views and was received, and well received, by several of the Congress leaders in different parts of India. Even Mr. Gandhi was aware of his presence in the Congress *pandal* at Karachi. Judged from the intellectual standpoint, Roy, ever a realist, stands out head and shoulders above all other Indian Communist leaders, and his continuous exhortations to “ eschew the disastrous ultra-left policy ” were calculated in the end to win over many more adherents to Communism than Deshpande’s vaporous thunderings could ever have done. His conviction removed from the political arena a dangerous enemy of capitalism, landlordism, and Imperialism, and struck another blow at Indian communism generally from which it has not as yet recovered.

The Effect of Roy’s Removal. Roy’s entourage, important additions to which were Maniben Kara, a municipal councillor of Bombay, Kunwar Brajesh Singh Lal of Kalakankar, Jotyendra Kumar Banarji also of the United Provinces, Charles Mascarenhas, the editor of the party’s new paper *Independent India*, and

Rajani Mukharji, whose field of operation lies in Bengal, continued for a time their previous activities in selected areas on the lines laid down by the master both before and after his arrest (for Roy has quite recently published a booklet entitled *Our Task in India*, which he wrote in jail and smuggled out to a Calcutta publishing house). He still has a fairly numerous following in Bombay led by G. L. Kandalkar, whose efforts are directed mainly towards the extension of the party's influence into the rural and industrial areas north and south of Bombay City and to the capture of Trade Unions at present controlled by a party, led by Randive and Jama-luddin Bukhari, which has renounced Deshpande's leadership and laid claim to the title of the "official" Communist Party of India. Kandalkar's group continues to receive instructions from the Brandler-Thalheimer Opposition Communist Group abroad, and it has been said (though not yet proved) that these will be supplemented in the near future by the personal directions of an American emissary who is to visit India on Brandler's behalf. But generally speaking, the work of all his adherents has lost its former virility, and within a year of Roy's conviction the party which his enthusiasm and energy had so speedily built up had lost much of its power and prestige.

By the end of 1932, Tayab Ali Shaikh, Charles Mascarenhas, Maniben Kara, and a number of other important Bombay leaders had been convicted for specific offences; . . . R. S. Ruikar, the president of the Majority Group of the All-India Trades-Union Congress, had been sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment in Nagpur; Sundar Kabadi and Brajesh Singh had left for Europe, the former apparently a deserter from the cause and the latter for reasons unknown but not, it would seem, entirely connected with the party's work; and J. K. Banarji had ceased to work openly.

The conduct of propaganda in favour of the "Platform of Unity" fell into other more moderate hands and the platform was finally wrecked on the rocks of dissension in Madras in July 1932, and it seems improbable at the time of writing that a stable platform on which

all parties can unite will ever be built from the wreckage.

The Comintern's Designs. Although the difficulties against which the "official" Communists have had to contend during the past three years have proved an insuperable obstacle on the road to successful reorganisation, yet no history of the period in question would be complete which did not include a brief summary of Moscow's intentions with regard to India. In December 1930 there appeared, first in the *International Press Correspondence*, the official organ of the Communist International, and later in the London *Daily Worker* and the Moscow *Pravda*, a thesis on Indian Communism entitled "Draft Platform of Action of the Communist Party of India". It was later translated into Urdu by an Indian member of the Comintern staff in Moscow and a number of copies were found secreted on the person of a British Communist who was searched at Harwich on his return from Moscow. A reprint made in Bombay was widely circulated at the Karachi Congress in March 1931 and yet another reprint was made in Berlin later in the same year. Of its wide circulation throughout India there is not the slightest doubt for numerous and various copies have been discovered in many different parts of the country since its first appearance.

"Draft Platform of Action for India."

After a vigorous denunciation of Gandhism and the Indian National Congress, this document advanced the following as the main tasks of the Indian Communist Party:—

- “ 1. The complete independence of India by the violent overthrow of British rule. The cancellation of all debts. The confiscation and nationalisation of all British factories, banks, railways, sea and river transport, and plantations.
2. The establishment of a Soviet government. The realisation of the right of national minorities to self-determination including separation. The abolition of the Native

States. The creation of an Indian Federal Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic.

3. The confiscation, without compensation, of all lands, forests and other property of the landlords, ruling princes, churches, the British Government, officials, and money-lenders, and the handing of them over for use by the toiling peasantry. The cancellation of slave agreements and all indebtedness of the peasantry to money-lenders and banks.
4. The eight-hour working day and the radical improvement of conditions of labour. Increase in wages and State maintenance for the unemployed."

These followed the assertion that the Communist Party of India considered the sole means of winning independence to be "a general national armed insurrection against the British exploiters", and the "Platform" then proceeded to enunciate a series of tactical and strategical principles, *e.g.*, that individual acts of terrorism would not achieve the emancipation of India or "revolutionary armed insurrection of the widest possible masses"; that the most dangerous obstacle to the victory of the revolution was the "left" element in the Indian National Congress—Jawahar Lal Nehru, Subhas Bose, etc.; and that a ruthless war must be waged on the left national reformists. The recital of a number of extravagant demands then followed, including the "spreading of revolutionary propaganda among the soldiers and police"; and the thesis concluded with a statement to the effect that the Communist Party of India regarded itself as a section of the Communist International. There is documentary evidence on record connecting this remarkable document (a copy of which is printed as an appendix) with the Communist International in Moscow.

Communist Propaganda. This programme formed the basis of a steady and very expensive stream of Communist propaganda on the subject of India during

the next two years. It is impossible, within the limited compass at my disposal, to deal in detail with this propaganda, on which has been spent, since Roy was deposed, the bulk of the funds allotted to the Eastern Secretariat for Indian work. Such expressions as "The workers and peasants will advance to the establishment of a Soviet India", "Demand the withdrawal of the troops and fight for a free independent India", "Young soldiers and sailors! Learn to use your rifles in order to turn them against the bourgeoisie!", or "Indian soldiers! prepare to hoist, when the time is ripe, the banner of armed insurrection, and, shoulder to shoulder with the toiling masses, to overthrow British Imperialism", have been of all too frequent occurrence and have clearly showed where Moscow's thoughts are hovering. Although the open hand of Moscow is not nearly so apparent in all this welter of words as it was before the signing of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement in October 1929, yet the Comintern still contrives to accomplish its work through its paid handmaidens, which, ostensibly at all events, affect to be independent of the control of their Muscovite masters. The most prolific of these in the output of propaganda on the subject of India is undoubtedly the League Against Imperialism, which came into being shortly before Sir David Petrie's book was produced, and of which it was there written (the quotation is from page 94) that "it was suspected, though not at first established, that the League derived its inspiration and a great part of its funds from the Communist International; and the organisers of the League were at special pains to conceal this fact". Evidence, which has accumulated since then, makes it perfectly clear that the League is completely controlled—and almost entirely financed—from Moscow. Till August 1931, Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya remained in charge of the Berlin Secretariat of the League working in conjunction with, and under the direction of, Willi Münzenberg, the well-known German Communist. In that month, however, Chattopadhyaya was summoned to Moscow to work there for the Communist International, possibly because the League's break with Jawahar Lal Nehru, which had occurred a few months earlier, no longer rendered his

presence in Berlin as necessary as before. His place was taken by Clemens Palme Dutt, the notorious British Communist of semi-Indian parentage, who figured so prominently behind the scenes in the Meerut case. The change made no perceptible difference to the League's activities which still have India as their main objective. Other thinly-veiled mouthpieces of the Communist mind, which have turned their attention to India, have been the Society for the Promotion of Cultural Relations with Soviet Russia and its subsidiaries, the very efficient Communist broadcasting stations in Moscow and Tashkent, the Friends of the Soviet Union, and, for a time, the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Congress in Shanghai. The bulk of this propaganda has latterly been posted in the United Kingdom (much of it, indeed, has ostensibly emanated from one or other of the numerous Communist organisations situated in London), and Moscow has thereby deftly turned the arrows of those critics who might seek to impute to her a breach of her side of the Protocol.

Anti-War Bodies. Other possible sources of infection are the various anti-war bodies which, as apparently purely pacifist non-political organisations, attract intellectual cranks and unsuspecting social-democrats. Proof that some of these bodies are in close co-operation with, if not actually controlled by Communist organisations is not wanting. It is known that the League Against Imperialism in Berlin is endeavouring to persuade its London branch (much to the embarrassment of the latter) to participate in the anti-war campaign in order to win new members and to strengthen its organisational basis. That this attempt to penetrate the anti-war movement has not met with general approval is evidenced by the withdrawal from the movement of such prominent persons as Dr. Maude Royden and the well-known writer and peer—Bertrand Russell—who has recently categorically declined to sign an appeal setting forth the objectives of the movement and soliciting co-operation. Undeterred by these defections, however, Moscow continues to take a keen interest in the movement and the Soviet Union was represented at a conference of the 'International Committee for the

Fight against War " held in Paris on the 20th December 1932, while Willi Münzenberg of the Berlin League Against Imperialism, Reginald Bridgeman of the League's London counterpart, and Henri Barbusse, the notorious French Communist, also attended along with others equally notorious in their particular spheres of activity. The conference passed a number of resolutions, chief among which were (1) the sending of a commission of inquiry to the Far East as a counter move to the Lytton Commission and (2) the holding of an Asiatic Congress at Shanghai or some other Far-Eastern centre, and laid down a comprehensive programme of future action. A detailed report of the proceedings appeared in the *International Press Correspondence* of the 29th December 1932 from which the following extract will, perhaps, be of interest:—" To sum up, it may be stated that this conference represented an excellent *working meeting*, concentrated in *mass action*. . . . The presence of delegates from the Soviet Union imparted a specially impressive feature to the conference. . . . This Paris Conference must be considered as a meeting greatly contributing to the *consolidation of the mass movement against imperialist War*."

A More Subdued Note. Despite the flamboyant note of optimism which pervaded this unceasing stream of literature on the subject of India, however, evidence was not lacking that the decline of the " official " party's influence gave rise to considerable misgivings in Moscow. Thus Molotov, an important member of the Politbureau, explained the position in India to the Sixteenth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held early in July 1930 in much less euphemistic terms than is usual on such occasions: " In India a Communist organisation is in the course of formation; this will undergo many trials and tests in the impending revolutionary struggle before it can take its place as the Bolshevik vanguard of the Indian proletariat." A little less than a year later, Robin Page Arnot was sent by the Communist Party of Great Britain to attend the Eleventh Plenum of the Communist International in Moscow. He admitted in the course of his speech that the Com-

munist Party of India existed, but existed in the process of formation.

As a matter of fact, this same Plenum devoted a considerable amount of its time to the discussion and eventual re-affirmation of the Comintern's Indian policy, and India figured prominently also in the proceedings of the Fifth Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions held in Moscow in August 1930. Summing up the work accomplished by this latter convocation, the *Pravda* of the 1st September 1930 stated that highly important directions had been given to the Indian revolutionary trades-union movement.

The Communist Programme. The most recent authoritative Communist statement in regard to India is to be found in the thesis presented to the Twelfth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International held in Moscow in August 1932. The part which India is to play in the revolutionary movement of 1933 is set forth as follows: "To strengthen the Communist Party politically and organisationally; to train Bolshevik cadres; to wage stubborn struggle in the reformist trade unions; to develop a wide anti-imperialist front; to liberate the masses from the influence of the National Congress; to make agitational and organisational preparations for a general strike; to give the greatest possible support to the peasant movement for the non-payment of taxes, rents and debts; and to popularise the basic slogans and tasks of the agrarian revolution."

Communist Agents. In order to ascertain how its directions and enunciated policy were being carried out in India and to advise their Indian comrades, the Comintern dispatched to India a series of agents of their own choosing. The first, who some say was the notorious Earl Browder but who successfully evaded all efforts to locate him, appears to have arrived at the close of 1929 and to have returned to Europe after a six months' tour of inspection. Nothing is known of what he achieved, but subsequent events have proved that his visit was of no practical value to Moscow and it may be dismissed without further consideration. Similar is the

case of Prem Lal Singh, an Indian student who had just completed a three years' course at the Lenin Institute in Moscow when he returned to India early in 1930 on a mission from the Communist International. After spending a few months in Meerut, where he possibly established contact with some of the prisoners, he returned to Moscow on the pretext that he had been afraid of the police. His masters were so enraged at his failure to accomplish anything that they promptly expelled him from the Communist International.

William Nathan Kweit and Harry Somers.

At about the same time there arrived in Bombay an American "antiquarian" named William Nathan Kweit. He was accompanied by his wife (*née* Helen Bowlen) and was joined in July 1930 by another American, Harry Somers, who posed as the representative of a cellulose company. Kweit and Somers were found to be meeting each other surreptitiously, and to be consorting also with certain members of Deshpande's party. They were well supplied with funds and their arrival coincided with the publication of certain illicit news-sheets by the Deshpande group. Inquiries disclosed the fact that they had secured passports under false pretences and probably under fictitious names and were almost certainly underground Communist agents. The presence in India of two such representatives of the Comintern had already been suggested by secret information and both Kweit and Somers were deported under the Foreigners' Act in September 1930.

Khushi Muhammad. It was at this juncture that M. N. Roy returned to India, and there is no doubt that when Muhammad Ali, *alias* Sepassi, was dispatched to India some months later, it was mainly because news of Roy's successes was causing considerable trepidation in Moscow. Muhammad Ali had formerly worked in M. N. Roy's European organisation and had been for several years engaged in secretarial work for the Comintern in Moscow. In April 1931 he was given a sum of £125 for his expenses and sent to the Hejaz in the hope that he would be able to mingle with the Indian pilgrims and return with them to India unobserved. Fortunately,

there was some hitch over the Egyptian visâ for Muhammad Ali's false passport (also provided by the Comintern) and he arrived in Mecca a few days after the departure of the pilgrims. After a lengthy stay during which he was awaiting further instructions from the Comintern, he returned to Moscow in November 1931.

Henry G. Lynd. More successful in his efforts was Henry G. Lynd, another American, who arrived in Bombay in February 1931 and remained in India until he was deported in December of that year. Lynd, who was in affluent circumstances, posed as an importer of skins, but inquiries disclosed that his business in New York was exceedingly dubious and that he had given a false reference when applying for a passport. There was evidence also that he was a Communist. Lynd's mission to India was clearly to apportion the blame for the "official" party's breakdown, to remedy whatever defects he found, and to fight the influence of M. N. Roy's party. He attended several secret meetings of the Executive Committee of the so-called Communist Party of India in Bombay, and it was known that the latter party had recently been placed in funds to the extent of Rs. 12,000. Lynd, moreover, was largely responsible for the issue of a new pamphlet entitled "Programme of the Communist Party of India" which naturally had as its basis the "Draft Platform of Action" already referred to. It would appear that Lynd correctly diagnosed the position, namely, that though in theory Deshpande's party might have some political influence, organically it had no strength and he, therefore, proposed completely to overhaul the existing machinery. The party was to be entirely purged of Congress and other reformist influences and would not, at first, attempt to include the peasants within its ranks. These latter would gradually be drawn within the net through the influence of their fellow-villagers in the factories whose activities were to be specially directed against *bourgeois* and reformist influences by propaganda in the towns and cities. The Workers' and Peasants' Parties were to serve as a reservoir for steady and permanent recruitment of new members to the Communist Party, and there would be a systematic transfer of politically prepared workers into

illegal organisations. The first and only practical step taken to bring this programme into force was the calling of a Young Workers' Conference in Bombay which was later banned by the authorities. On arrival in Marseilles in the course of deportation to the United States of America, Lynd left the ship and made a bee-line for Moscow, there to report his conclusions to those at whose instance he had undoubtedly gone to India.

Amir Haidar Khan. The next (in point of time, though probably first in order of importance) of Moscow's emissaries to be discovered was Amir Haidar Khan, a Punjabi and an absconding accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. Amir Haidar was by no means the least of those for whose arrest warrants were issued in March 1929, and his continuance at large might have had serious results had he not preferred to spend the greater part of his freedom abroad. He returned surreptitiously to India in the guise of a seaman at the end of March 1931 and settled down in Madras where he began to fulfil the mission on which the Third International is said to have sent him to India. He gradually established himself as a Communist leader of importance and drew round him a growing circle of workers for the Communist cause, amongst them D. Subba Rao whom he engaged as a full-time propagandist for work amongst textile workers. Slow though he was to establish himself in surroundings as different from his native province as chalk from cheese, he had, nevertheless, within a year of his arrival formed groups in three important mills, organised a local branch of the Young Workers' League, and dispatched to Moscow at least one candidate for training in Communist principles with a promise that more should follow. Having previously worked in Bombay for some time, he had little difficulty in establishing touch with Communists there, but his ambition seems to have been that Madras should ultimately supersede Bombay as the headquarters of the Communist movement in India. In fact, preparations for an all-India convention to be held in Madras were already in train when he was arrested on the 7th May 1932.

The papers seized at the time of his arrest show how complete was this liaison with Bombay. There were

amongst them letters from both Deshpande's and Ranadive's parties which recent events have shown are at daggers drawn. The letters in question show that each party had laid its case before Amir Haidar in an attempt to win him to its side. Of the two he appears to have preferred the "secessionists" (as Ranadive's followers were called), and it is reported that he had arranged to smuggle their reports and literature to Moscow and to secure their recognition there. This should have been a matter of no great difficulty in view of the report which Lynd is known to have submitted to the Communist International at the end of 1931. Ranadive's reports were almost certainly to be carried by students whose dispatch to Moscow, at the rate of one a month, Amir Haidar had arranged. It is a little uncertain how many actually left, but it was probably three or four, and it is known that another was due to leave shortly after the 22nd May 1932 while the Calcutta and Bombay centres had been asked to select students for future dispatch. The elaborate preparations made in this regard are of particular interest. One letter asked for a most detailed history of intending students. Question (e) of this document ran: "Whether he is suffering from T. B. or similar disease (without this information we cannot get financial help)", and suggested that Moscow was insisting on a higher standard of physical fitness than in the days when Muzaffar Ahmad and Soumendra Nath Tagore were taken into the fold. From another letter it was to be inferred that the "financial assistance" consisted of the cost of the passage to Moscow and amounted, in each case, to some 500 rupees, which "can be demanded at the centre when the comrade reaches headquarters".

Amir Haidar Khan, with his recent training in methods of Communist attack, was clearly a most dangerous individual, and the fact that he was sentenced at the end of the year to terms of imprisonment totalling two years gives cause for congratulation. He might, in Bombay, eventually have proved a welcome counterblast to the growing influence of M. N. Roy's partisans; on the virgin soil of Madras his continued activities could cause nothing but consternation.

John Magnus Clark and William Bennett.

Two other Communist agents sent to India during this period were John Magnus Clark and William Bennett who arrived in Bombay in September 1931. Beyond the fact that they were obviously not what they claimed to be and that both had left Canada supposedly for Moscow, nothing could be proved against them. Clark and Bennett brought with them considerable sums of money of the spending of which they were unable to give a satisfactory account. An investigation of their case raised the strong presumption that a not inconsiderable part of it was spent in furtherance of the Communist movement. This and other circumstances, into which it is unnecessary to go here, led to their arrest in September 1932. They ultimately left the country at their own request in the following month.

The Standard of Moscow's Emissaries.

Although it cannot be claimed that none has escaped official attention, it may yet be accounted fortunate indeed that so many of those whom the Comintern has dispatched to India have come under the watchful eye of the police. Except for Amir Haidar Khan, none of them has any practical achievement to his credit. This is due to a variety of reasons, not least of which is the preventive action which the authorities in India have been able to take. But another important reason is the inferior stamp of Moscow's agents themselves, and it was a strange freak of fortune which placed substantial funds in the hands of those who were incapable of spending to the best advantage while keeping an energetic enthusiast like Amir Haidar Khan in penury to the detriment of all his ambitious schemes.

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CHAPTER 20.

A DANGER AHEAD.

Communism and Bengal Terrorists. In order to procure the requisite background against which to set the amalgamation of dangerous forces with which it is my object now to deal, it will be necessary to prefix to my own narrative a somewhat lengthy revised summary of the matter contained in the first ten pages (128-137) of Chapter V of *Communism in India, 1924-1927*. It has already been shown in Chapter 15 how Bengal was visited by Abani Mukharji, who came as a Bolshevik emissary from Chattopadhyaya's group in Europe, and by Nalini Gupta, who was sent by M. N. Roy. Both these visitors had past histories as members of the terrorist party in Bengal, and they were sent by Bengali revolutionaries in Europe to renew associations with their own countrymen. It must be remembered in this connection that M. N. Roy himself was a terrorist pure and simple before he fled his country in 1915, and that Chattopadhyaya was advocating in London wholesale assassination in order to do away with British rule in India as long ago as 1909. Bengali terrorists come, almost to a man, from the respectable middle class of Hindus who are not disposed to accept the Bolshevik creed as a whole, though they are ready enough to make common cause with almost any anti-British organisation, and particularly with one that is in a position to supply the sinews of war. Both Abani Mukharji and Nalini Gupta were, therefore, well received in terrorist circles in Bengal. Particularly was this so in the case of Abani Mukharji, who, despite his being branded as a spy by M. N. Roy, retained the confidence of an important group of terrorists till he again left for Europe early in 1924 when the news of the institution of the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case was bruited abroad. *He is an exile to this day. Nalini Gupta, on the other hand, remained to be convicted at Cawnpore, and, although he was prematurely

released owing to ill health in July 1925, he has never been prominent in Indian Communism since his conviction. Indeed, there is reason to believe that, but for certain technical knowledge of bomb-making which he alone possessed and which was far too valuable to be left lying fallow, he would never have been induced to revert to revolutionary work; for he seemed to have realised that conspiracy generally was not worth the candle. His place as Roy's agent in Bengal was taken for a very short time by Jiban Lal Chattarji, who was, within a few months of his appointment, arrested under Regulation III of 1818 on account of the very prominent part which he had played in terrorist activities in Bengal from 1917 onwards. These arrests practically extinguished Bolshevik organisation in Bengal, but some of those terrorists who were left had been brought to recognise the value of association with so powerful an anti-British organisation as the Communist International. Amongst them was a certain Jogesh Chattarji, an important member of the *Anushilan* Terrorist Party of the Tippera district of Bengal, who had been confined from November 1916 till August 1920 on account of his terrorist propensities. His whereabouts were unknown from October 1923 until October 1924 when he was arrested in Calcutta on his way back from Pondicherry whither he had been to visit Ram Charan Lal Sharma. Ram Charan Lal Sharma, a resident of Etah in the United Provinces, had for many years been an associate of well-known Bengali terrorists and was convicted in 1909 under section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code. Released in 1918, he fled to Pondicherry in 1920 to avoid execution of a warrant which was issued for his arrest on a charge of promoting hatred between different classes of His Majesty's subjects. He never returned till 1931, when he was permitted to enter a Madras hospital where he died within a few days of admission. In the course of his stay in French territory, he fell under the influence of M. N. Roy, as whose chief agent for communication with India generally and Bengal in particular he acted for many years. He was one of the eight accused against whom a plaint was lodged at Cawnpore in 1924, but he could not be produced before

the court and remained a fugitive from justice till a few days before his death.

The Kakori Conspiracy. Much information was subsequently obtained about Jogesh Chattarji which showed that during most of the time that he was absent from Bengal he was organising in other parts of India. Much of his time had been spent in the United Provinces, and the evidence obtained about his activities then and subsequently resulted in his conviction along with a number of terrorists from those provinces, chief of whom was Sachindra Nath Sanyal of Benares, in the Kakori Conspiracy Case on the 8th April 1927. In fact, a document of which Jogesh tried to divest himself when he was arrested was later produced as an important item of evidence of conspiracy in that case. This document contained the minutes of an obviously revolutionary meeting and indicated that revolutionary organisations existed in a number of centres in the United Provinces. *Inter alia* it was resolved "to preach social revolutionary ideas and Communistic principles; and to gain the sympathy of workers and peasants."

The Hindustan Republican Association. The organisation referred to was known as the Hindustan Republican Association (the word "Socialist" was to be added to the title at a later date) and Jogesh Chattarji can be shown to have gone to Pondicherry on behalf of the Association to interview R. C. L. Sharma, presumably with the object of combining more closely with the Bolshevik element with which the Association was most certainly in sympathy. The Hindustan Republican Association could not possibly be described at this stage as a Bolshevik concern, but it undoubtedly had Bolshevik connections through Jogesh Chattarji and it is also apparent from the resolutions quoted above that it was deeply tinged with "red" ideas.

Roy's "Ideology". From the very earliest days of his rise to power M. N. Roy had strenuously set his face against acts of individual terrorism beloved of Ben-

gali terrorists. Two illustrations of his dogma will suffice. Writing to R. C. L. Sharma in 1924 he said:—“ We have not done anything about the automatic purposely, but I will see to it if you are so insistent. My request only is that nothing can be gained by this method of work. Look at our Bengal people. What have they gained by their recent stupidity? You cannot make a revolution so easily. First of all the mentality of the people—or at least a sufficiently large portion of it—is to be revolutionised. This cannot be done by stray pistol shots ”. A year later he published in his paper, *The Masses of India*, a manifesto to “ The Bengal Revolutionary Organisation of Youth ” from The Young Communist International. This manifesto pointed out that the liberation of India could only be effected by a revolution of the masses, which again could only come about by the combined efforts of the revolutionary intelligentsia of the proletariat; for on the latter devolved the task of preparing the former and the actual establishment of the organisation. Individual acts of terrorism were deprecated for the sole reason that such acts defeated their own ends. It was emphasized that it was the masses that must be trained for the fight.

Roy's Later Influence. Although there is no evidence that M. N. Roy established personal touch with Bengali terrorists (Subhas Bose and those who accompanied him to Karachi are almost certainly exceptions) during his recent sojourn in India—indeed it has already been said that he did not visit Bengal—yet it is a strange fact that it was not until 1931, when Roy was present in India in person, that his views began to find anything like general acceptance amongst members of both the *Anushilan* and *Jugantar* Parties. It will be shown at a later stage in this chapter how great has been the landslide in his favour during the last two years and how large an influence his preachings are likely to have on terrorism of the future.

“ **Depressed Classes Improvement Society.** ”
The terrorists mentioned hitherto may be regarded as

mainly belonging to the *Jugantar* (or western Bengal) Party. It is difficult, however, to allocate some individuals to either the eastern or western Bengal groups. For example, Jogesh Chattarji began his revolutionary career as a member of the *Anushilan* (or eastern Bengal) Party, but his subsequent connection with the Hindustan Republican Association with its numerous *Jugantar* links seems to indicate his membership of the latter party at a time when his Bolshevik tendencies became apparent. The *Anushilan* group proper, however, also desired to have the handling of Bolshevik gold, and accordingly in 1925 that party considered the adoption of a form of open organisation for the ostensible purpose of social service. The result was that a scheme, Communist in its origin and inspiration, was prepared to inaugurate a "Depressed Classes Improvement Society". This scheme was evolved after a meeting of leaders at which it was agreed that a handful of armed revolutionary patriots could never win *swaraj* for India and that a necessary preliminary was the education of the populace to that end. Plans were made to send an emissary to England to arrange for the transmission of funds from the "Russian Labour Party in England" to the Depressed Classes and Labour Associations in India through which the *Anushilan* Party would receive money for its terrorist purposes.

Contacts with Russia. Jogesh Chattarji had a friend named Gopendra Chakravarty who was also a member of the Tippera section of the *Anushilan* Party and who disappeared with him towards the close of 1923. For some considerable time there was no information of Gopen Chakravarty's whereabouts, but it was subsequently established that he was identical with a youth who had arrived in Hamburg in March 1924 under the name of B. Ghose. It was also ascertained that he had been sent to Europe by Nalini Gupta and that he had associated with Bolsheviks immediately upon his arrival and had visited Moscow, probably in the company of M. N. Roy. He returned to India in June 1925, again under a false name (Arjun Lal Misra), and was "picked

up " immediately on arrival in Bombay where he proceeded to unbosom himself to several persons with whom he came into contact. He then travelled slowly across India to Calcutta where he soon got into touch with members of the *Anushilan* Party and endeavoured to divert their activities into Communist channels. Like his precursors he was well received and there followed reports of proposals to send other emissaries to foreign countries to establish contact with Communists there. Though efforts were made to translate these proposals into action, apparently only one member, Akshoy Kumar Shaha of Mymensingh, succeeded in getting away. He left Calcutta in February 1926 and ultimately reached Moscow where he remained as an unimportant professor of science in a Russian university till he was allowed to return to his home at the end of 1932.

Gopendra Nath Chakravarty. Soon after his arrival in Bengal Gopendra Chakravarty went to Mymensingh, apparently with the approval of the leaders, to organise the *Anushilan* Party there on Communist lines. By the beginning of 1926, he had completely re-established himself with the *Anushilan* Party, of which he had become a leading member, and had drawn up a scheme of re-organisation on lines agreeable to Moscow and upon which an important leader of the Party had set the seal of approval. It provided, *inter alia*, for organisation

- (1) among students who were to form unions and agitate to obtain control of the educational system;
- (2) among labourers and peasants who were to be educated in accordance with the usual Communist programme. This education was to be taken in hand by members of the terrorist party, co-operative banks being opened for the general benefit;
- (3) in the Congress which was to be used by members of his party as a cloak for their terrorist activities;

- (4) on military lines, which meant the formation of volunteer corps and athletic clubs to further military training; agitation for Indianisation of the army was included.

Attempts were also to be made to tamper with the army in India and connection was to be established with Moscow through the Soviet Consuls in Java, Persia, and China, through whose good offices money was also to be transmitted to India.

The *Anushilan* Party's Programme. Something was done in furtherance of this programme under each of the above heads. Students' associations were formed in several districts of Bengal; co-operative banks were opened in Tippera and Faridpur; the Congress has been used since then as a cloak for revolutionary activities; and some volunteer corps actually came into existence, notably that in Calcutta whose triumphal march with its "general", Subhas Chandra Bose, riding at its head, through the northern streets of the City at the time of the 1928 session of the Indian National Congress is a matter of recorded history. Chakravarty laid special stress on the revolutionary aims of the party and, to further these ends, he stipulated that each department must have a secret section. He did not, however, insist on the collection of arms until the man-power had been increased but desired that advantage should be taken of any opportunity to secure arms that might occur. His programme did not include incitement to acts of terrorism, but it aimed at the gradual extension of Communism and of the influence of the terrorists over the masses, so that, when the time was ripe, a mass terrorist offensive could be undertaken.

Gopendra Chakravarty's Conviction. Gopen Chakravarty was arrested in Dacca on the 29th April 1926 but was released as he could not be dealt with under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act as it read at that time. For some time after his arrest and release he took care to make himself inconspicuous, but he was finally rearrested in March 1929 and has just been sentenced to four years' imprisonment at Meerut.

Other Bengal Terrorists—Jatindra Nath Mitra. Other Bengali terrorists who flitted across the Communist stage during the period covered by Sir David Petrie's book were Jatindra Nath Mitra, Sachindra Nath Sanyal, Dharani Mohan Goswami, and Soumendranath Tagore. Their importance may be summarised in a very few words. Jatin Mitra was dispatched by Nalini Gupta to Germany to learn the principles of Bolshevism and the cult of revolution, his expenses being borne by M. N. Roy. He returned to Bengal as Roy's *Anushilan* agent in 1925, but Roy's criticism of his work soon caused resentment and their relations with each other became strained with the result that Mitra devoted his attention purely to the terrorist side of the party's work.

Sachindra Nath Sanyal. From participation in a long series of terrorist activities, including deep complicity in a conspiracy with M. N. Roy and the notorious Rash Behari Bose (whose lieutenant he had been in his early days) to smuggle arms and ammunition into India from the Far East, Sachindra Nath Sanyal emerged in 1924 as the leader of the Hindustan Republican Association already referred to and was sentenced as such to transportation for life in the Kakori Conspiracy Case on the 27th April 1927. The several sentences which he has been condemned to serve include another of transportation for life in the Benares Conspiracy Case in 1915, his premature release being due to the royal amnesty in 1920. He has shown himself during his brief spells of freedom from confinement to be a confirmed advocate of violence and a dangerous organiser of every form of revolutionary activity.

Dharani Mohan Goswami. It was Dharani Mohan Goswami's forthright advocacy of Communist principles which caused a split in the *Anushilan* Party of which he was himself a prominent member. As a result of his close alliance with Gopen Chakravarty several of the junior members of the party were compelled to break away from their old leaders, who, while quite ready to receive Bolshevik assistance, were not sincerely prepared to accept all the tenets of Bolshevik theory. Goswami went on to introduce members of his party into

existing Communist organisations and in February 1927 succeeded in obtaining seven seats in the executive council of the newly-formed Bengal Workers' and Peasants' Party—a committee of which Nalini Gupta was also a member. Like his collaborator Gopen Chakravarty, Dharani Goswami too has just been sentenced at Meerut to seven years' transportation.

Soumendra Nath Tagore. Another member of the same committee was Soumendra Nath Tagore, a grand-nephew of the famous poet, Rabindra Nath Tagore, and a member of the Indian Communist Party. Soumendra had been introduced to leaders of the *Anushilan* Party by Jatin Mitra and he rapidly attained considerable importance both as a revolutionary and as a Communist. There is information on record to show that he was concerned in conspiracies to assassinate officials on the revolutionary side, while, on the Bolshevik side, he was put into touch with M. N. Roy by Nalini Gupta with whom he became very friendly. He left India in May 1927 on a definite mission to the Comintern to obtain funds for Communist work in India and to improve the connection between the Communist-terrorist element in India and anti-British forces abroad. Roy's downfall a year later put Tagore out of commission and he has spent the past two years of his life abroad on an island off the southern coast of Italy attempting to recuperate his failing health.

Bepin Behari Ganguli. Another person of whom brief mention must be made for the purposes of this narrative is Bepin Behari Ganguly who has been engaged in revolutionary conspiracy since the year 1907 and has also fomented labour unrest. It was he who sheltered Abani Mukharji when he returned to India in 1923, and he was one of the few selected Bengali terrorists whose names were given to Charles Ashleigh when he left Berlin in August 1922 as an agent of the Comintern for propaganda work in India and as a bearer of messages from M. N. Roy to his Indian agents. Ganguli was concerned in a plot to assassinate police officers in Calcutta and was arrested in March 1924 and imprisoned

under Regulation III of 1818. Released in 1928 in pursuance of the policy in force at that time, he is now absconding with a heavy price on his head.

The H.S.R.A. and Communism. The Cawnpore and Kakori Conspiracy Cases had their effect no less on this particular branch of Communist organisation than on the movement generally. Nevertheless, the Hindustan Republican Association, which in 1929 significantly took to itself a new title—The Hindustan Socialist Republican Association—spread its tentacles to other parts of India and flourished where it took root. In the Punjab it produced Bhagat Singh, the notorious assassin who, in 1929, murdered Mr. Saunders in Lahore and attempted to kill certain members of the Legislative Assembly in New Delhi and who was hanged in Lahore in March 1931. It produced, too, the dangerous mixed gang of residents of the Punjab and the United Provinces who mined the Viceregal train in Delhi at the end of the same year (1929) in an unsuccessful attempt to murder Lord Irwin. Its members were also responsible for many minor terrorist outrages in the United Provinces, Bihar, and Bombay. Such outrages were undoubtedly the manifestations of the general revolutionary movement inspired and largely equipped from Bengal, the chief “liaison officers” being Batukeshwar Datt and Indra Chandra Narang. The former was a member of the Bengal Workers’ and Peasants’ Party in which capacity he took an active part in the organisation of Labour trouble in Howrah during 1928 and 1929. He was hanged in March 1931 along with his Punjabi confederate, Bhagat Singh, for complicity in the murder of Mr. Saunders some fifteen months earlier. Indra Chandra Narang is a Punjabi who was prosecuted, together with nineteen Bengali associates, in a conspiracy case which was launched at Deoghar in Bihar in April 1928. He was convicted by the lower court but acquitted on appeal to the High Court at Patna, whereafter he returned to the Punjab, a dangerous emissary of a dangerous creed, to renew the associations of his boyhood and to tell them in glowing terms of his experiences in revolutionary Bengal.

Although it cannot be said by any stretch of the imagination that the series of outrages referred to was the direct result of Communist inspiration, yet the long-drawn-out trials which followed them showed how deep had been the culprits' study of Communist theory and history. Their ideals were those of Marx and Lenin; their action was bred of impatience to wear the martyr's crown.

The H.S.R.A. Scotched. With the removal of Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Datt (and of a number of others of their way of thinking in Bihar, the United Provinces, the Punjab, and Sind) the movement in northern India quickly lost its Communist tinge and became more frankly terrorist. With the child went the father, and the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, though retaining the same title, began to swing over to terrorism pure and simple. It has now been broken up by means of police action and the residue are too busy picking up the pieces to think seriously of Communism. This does not, however, apply to those to whom the leisure of life in jail gives the time and opportunity to make a study of Communist theory and history.

Communism and Terrorism. In Bengal, on the other hand, Communist organisation amongst those of terrorist inclinations went steadily on. The formation of the Workers' and Peasants' Party in 1927 was followed a year later by the appearance of a Socialists' Youth League of which the founder was Santosh Mitter, the head of another group of terrorists, who was shot by the police in the course of disorders in the Hijli Detention Camp in 1931. With the inauguration of this league were associated Jawahar Lal Nehru, a leading Congressman whose Communist leanings are well known, and Dr. Bhupendra Nath Datt, a prominent figure in the political history of Bengal and one who narrowly escaped prosecution in the Meerut Conspiracy Case, while Bepin Behari Ganguli, who was later to come into such prominence as an instigator of terrorist crime, was closely associated with an indistinguishable organisation of a similar name—The Socialist League. Attached to

Ganguli's side of the organisation was the Indian Republican Army, a note of whose plans had been discovered in a search in Calcutta in November 1925. Even at that early stage, the progressive steps by which the "army" was to proceed to its goal were roughly as follows:—

- (a) the formation of effective groups all over the country;
- (b) demonstrations of violence (*e.g.*, the murder of officials, the wrecking of trains and the capture of arms and ammunition);
- (c) simultaneous risings in various districts;
- (d) guerilla warfare; and
- (e) open revolution.

Towards the end of 1928 came the Young Comrades' League with Dharani Goswami at its head and within its ranks a large number of terrorists, many of whom have subsequently been placed under detention on account of their revolutionary proclivities. The institution of the Meerut case struck another severe blow at all these organisations, but when those who survived it had recovered from the shock there sprang up in Calcutta an organisation known as the *Samyarak* Party consisting at first entirely of members of the old Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. This party gradually attracted to it a number of members of other terrorist groups in and around Calcutta and obtained control of six workers' unions in the City. It grew in strength until, in the middle of 1932, division, inevitable apparently in Bengali politics, severed its ranks. The immediate point at issue was the question of secrecy. Badal Ganguly, one of the party's leading lights, acting on instructions from Bombay and Meerut (where a number of accused were on bail at the time), insisted that the party must go underground. Aghore Sen, another of the party's leaders, on the other hand, was equally insistent that salvation lay only in open propaganda. The two parted company, Aghore Sen to continue to control a depleted party and Badal Ganguly to join hands with the Indian Students' Group the first of whose envoys had made his appearance in India a few months previously. More will be written of this latter group at a later stage in this chapter.

Widespread Terrorist Acceptance of Communist Theory. Whether it was a quickening of the embers left smouldering when Dharani Goswami and Gopen Chakravarty were removed to the Meerut jail, or a tardy ripening of the harvest sown and sedulously nurtured by M. N. Roy from 1920 onwards, or a direct result of the spectacular terrorist raid in Chittagong in April 1930, or a real change in outlook amongst the members of the terrorist parties it is difficult to say, but the early months of 1931 witnessed a remarkable renaissance of the Communist spirit amongst all classes of terrorists in Bengal. The change first expressed itself in a sudden thirst for knowledge of Communist theory and history on the part of those who were confined, by virtue of the special legislation which had been enacted, in various jails and detention camps up and down the country wherever Bengali terrorists are confined. The leaders of both parties, *Jugantar* and *Anushilan*, lectured their following in the jails. The demands for Communist literature exceeded all bounds, and when it was refused by the authorities it was smuggled in by sympathetic extraneous hands. Many of the messages which *détenus* carried (sometimes verbally sometimes otherwise) from one jail to another emphasized the importance of spreading the doctrines of Communism amongst the rank and file. A few leaders there were who demurred, but as time went on their following decreased and they themselves fell into line. Thus, in a comparatively short space of time, a considerable number of known members of the *Anushilan* Party and a fair number of the *Jugantar* also had been weaned from ideas of individual terrorism to Moscow's doctrine of mass uprisings at the appointed time, and a beginning had been made in placing them under trained Communist leadership. The spread of this cult in western Bengal (the permeation of Bepin Ganguli's party can mean nothing else) is a cause of considerable anxiety, for what success Roy had previously obtained, had been almost entirely confined to eastern Bengal.

The Manifesto of the *Hindustan Samyavadi Sangha*. This metamorphosis had embraced so large a percentage of terrorists by the end of 1932, that even

Subhas Bose, fearing, no doubt, that he would otherwise lose control of the following by which he sets such store, decided to subscribe to a wholly Communist programme. At the beginning of October there was brought to Jnananjan Neogy, Subhas Chandra Bose's right-hand man in Calcutta, a new programme which called itself "The Task Ahead (Manifesto of *Hindustan Samyavadi Sangha*)". The authorship of this document is variously ascribed to Jibanalal Chattarji, who, it will be remembered, was M. N. Roy's agent in Bengal for a very short period in 1923, and to Subhas Bose himself. As, however, all versions agree that Subhas saw it and gave it his blessing and as the point, therefore, is immaterial, I will do no more than express my view that it bears the stamp of Bose's authorship. This manifesto consists, for the most part, of a lengthy and one-sided recital of the political history of India in its relation to the larger world movement interspersed with the conclusions which the writer wishes to be drawn therefrom. At one stage much is made of the point that "non-violence, as it has been preached by the followers of Tolstov, has no place in Hindu philosophy, while the teachings of the *Gita*—the central scriptures of the Hindus—are directly opposed to it"; at another of the need "to fight on every front—to attack every weak point of the enemy and . . . always to remember that the enemy's difficulty should be our opportunity". The collapse of the Burma rebellion is cited as an illustration of the need for the combination of the peasants and the townsfolk; events in Chittagong of how arms may be captured and of how, if the surrounding population are friendly, it is possible to evade arrest even if the whole countryside is "scoured by the military and the police over and over again".¹ The conclusion reached in regard to the army, after a prolonged discussion which covers many pages, is that "as in Russia, the rank and file of the Indian section of the army are recruited from the peasantry and, if there is a peasants' movement in the country, even the hitherto loyal Indian Army may be infected through the mass

¹ The arrest of Surja Sen in Chittagong at the time of going to the press should do much towards shaking the foundations of this theory.

movement appealing directly to their class interests and one can expect the Indian troops to sympathise or fraternise with the revolutionary masses.” The failure of Gandhi’s non-co-operation movement is assessed under twelve different heads, the chief of which are that it tended to make a fetish of non-violence, that it preached the amelioration of the conditions of the peasantry and labouring classes but failed to identify itself with their interests as against those of the landlords and industrial capitalists, and that it stood for an adjustment of interests and not for a radical transformation.

The *sangha*’s programme is nowhere clearly set forth but can be gleaned from certain “conclusions” which are drawn from time to time. Of these, three important passages may be quoted:—“If the fight for freedom is to succeed certain things have to be done—

- (1) The army of occupation must be engaged so that it may not be able to concentrate its forces in one locality;
- (2) a section at least of the standing army must be won over to the popular cause;
- (3) the fight must be carried on simultaneously in the towns and villages;
- (4) the civil administration must be simultaneously undermined and paralysed;
- (5) a *de facto* people’s government must be set up;
- (6) last, but not least, international recognition must be forthcoming for this *de facto* people’s government . . .

How to fulfil the above six tasks is the problem which awaits solution at our hands.”

This passage was followed several pages later by another which suggests that, if the movement were handled in two stages—the political revolution (which will overthrow the alien bureaucracy) and the socio-economic or proletarian revolution (which will complete the work of internal reorganisation and transformation)—it would on the whole take less time. If the middle classes (in whom Bose evidently has very little faith) could succeed in overthrowing foreign domination with the support of the masses, it would probably be better for

India. In that event, the revolution would proceed in two stages—the masses themselves would first overthrow the existing social order and then bring about a radical socio-economic reconstruction.

Another passage which spoke for itself was the following:—"The party organisation throughout the country should follow the lines of governmental organisation and should aspire to become in due course a parallel Government—a State within a State. The centralised party should have different departments working among different sections of the community. There should, therefore, be separate departments for (1) peasants, (2) labourers, (3) youths, (4) women, (5) members of the depressed classes, (6) a separate organisation for every minority community in the country, and (7) volunteers. Every discontented and exploited individual or group should be approached and won over to the popular cause. Patient work and persevering toil will be necessary for the purpose." (A previous passage had suggested the need for suborning the civil employees of Government in order to penetrate the intelligence system, and pertinently asked, "How can the enemy be defeated unless you know beforehand what the tactics and plans of the enemy are?"). The opening paragraphs had described the *sangha's* aims as the waging of "a relentless war against all enemies of freedom—whether foreign or indigenous, whether political bureaucrats, feudal landlords, or millionaire capitalists", and had offered the Indian masses "a bold lead and a militant programme". The whole purpose of the arguments adduced was clearly to inculcate Communist ideas into overheated brains athirst for some new-fangled "ism". In his own handwriting, Bose commended this programme not only to his own dwindling following in Bengal but also to his friends in Bombay and Sind. To Jnananjan Neogy he held up the Irish rebellion as an ideal to be pursued. Communist were to be preferred to terrorist methods. India's independence was still a long way off and terrorists (as they are known to-day) must be induced to hold their hands in patience against the time when the masses could be organised and armed for the final civil war and social revolution. Meanwhile, *Samya Sadans*

(Houses of Equality) were to be set up in every district and sub-division. Later on, when sufficient men were forthcoming to work in a wider field, the party must "go to work among the labouring classes, cultivators, depressed classes and women on an intensive scale" and must seek also "to undermine internally the forces of the enemy". Eventually would come the final blow to bureaucracy in all its forms—the engagement of the military on all fronts simultaneously and the wrecking of the civil administration. His injunctions to those in Bombay, though much the same in essence, devoted more space to exposing the Congress as "a social service league" whose activities had been seriously hampered by "the great limitations imposed by Gandhiji"—non-violence and a strict regard for Indian vested interests. "Hence", he said, "the left-wing of the Congress must immediately organise itself as an all-India party with a socialist programme and a militant plan of action". Steps were being taken to do this in other parts of the country but nothing had been done so far in Bombay, Ahmedabad, or Poona. Nor, it appears, had Sind been touched, for Bose's instructions to a left-wing Congress leader there were on much the same lines as those to his friends in Bombay.

Subhas Bose and M. N. Roy. It was mentioned in the previous chapter that Subhas Bose and M. N. Roy met in Karachi while the Congress was in session there in April 1931, and another passage in the same chapter described how Roy's party was able to capture the All-India Trades-Union Congress in Calcutta later in the same year only because he received the support of Subhas Bose, the president of the session. While, therefore, there is no recorded evidence to that effect, it is a reasonable assumption that this new programme represents but the germination of seeds sown by M. N. Roy in the mind of Subhas Bose in the summer of 1931. How nearly Bose's new proposals approach to Roy's ideals can best be shown by a short quotation from a recent exposition of the latter's views. It is taken from the booklet entitled "Our Task in India" (the very name connotes collaboration) which, as has already been mentioned, Roy wrote in jail and succeeded in smuggling out for publica-

tion. "In principle", the selected passage reads, "ourselves and terrorists stand on the same plank. Our common principle is 'Revolution'. But we object to their resort to individual assassination and murders. We do this on the consideration of expediency. We cannot condemn it on principle. To them we say, friends, this will not do. Several Chittagong raids will not drive the 'benevolent' Imperialism from our country. The lever has got to be applied on the appropriate fronts and the momentum has got to be gathered on the basis of a program." It will be noticed how little this differs from the quotations already made from Roy's earlier writings.

The Absence of Official Communist Inspiration. If the above view is correct, it is unnecessary to seek the hand of Moscow in the sudden transformation of the past two years. Nor, in fact, is there any evidence that the hidden hand is there, beyond a brief note from the pen of Muhammad Ali *alias* Sepassi, of the Comintern's Eastern Secretariat, which appeared in *The Communist International* (a London journal) of the 1st February 1931 and which ran as follows:—"The programme prepared by the Communist Party of India will help it draw also to its ranks and round its banner that revolutionary stratum of the city petty bourgeoisie . . . which are engaged in terrorist attempts. The terrorist activities of these revolutionary youths have increased very much during the year." Moscow was, therefore, alive to the situation but it would be more than a little difficult to reconcile the vociferous condemnation which all her propagandist organs have persistently showered on Bose, not only as a Congressman but also for his trades-union activities, with the grant of her general blessing to a scheme which is issued in Bose's name.

Moscow and Indian Students in England. There is, however, one side of Moscow's present activities which is extremely germane to the present subject and which falls to be dealt with at this juncture. Amongst the papers seized by the London police when they raided the headquarters of the Communist Party of Great Britain in King Street, Covent Garden, in 1926 were some

which revealed the fact that, at the instigation of the Communist Party of Great Britain (which, it must be remembered, receives its instructions direct from Moscow), systematic attempts had been made to infect Indian students at Oxford with Bolshevik ideas. Two non-Indian students were the agents employed in this task. These men attended meetings of the *Majlis*, a social and political organisation intended for the discussion of Indian affairs and the promotion of unity and comradeship amongst Indians at Oxford. Prior to the exposure of their plans, these agents had arranged for interviews between likely students and Shapurji Saklatvala whose name needs no introduction. It was hoped that Saklatvala would be able finally to induce these youths to work wholeheartedly for the promotion of Communism in India. The publicity which was given to these revelations in the English Press undoubtedly frightened the embryo Communists thus recruited, the majority of whom hoped at a later date to secure appointments under the Government of India, and the Communist Party of Great Britain was made to recognise the fact that further efforts in this direction would, for the time being, prove unprofitable. Working, as always, through Saklatvala, who, with Clemens Palme Dutt, had long since come to be recognised as the expert debaucher of Indians in England, the C. P. G. B. thereafter confined its attention to such ready-made Indian organisations in London itself as might reasonably be expected to yield a harvest of workers. Chief amongst them was the London branch of the Indian National Congress (another branch in Edinburgh was never exploited to the same degree), of which Saklatvala eventually gained control in 1930 after a struggle lasting a little over two years. His triumph was shortlived, however, for this "branch of the Congress" was disaffiliated by the parent body in India in August 1931 and thereafter died a lingering death. An Indian Study Circle formed by Clemens Palme Dutt and others early in 1926 proved even less of a success and interest in it soon waned, while a completely innocuous Bengali Literary Society to which Saklatvala also turned his attention met with a similar fate.

The University Students' Group. Thus, thanks partly to the good sense of the students themselves and partly to dislike of Saklatvala by the moneyed Indians on whose munificence the majority of Indian associations in London rely for their very existence, the British Communists, defeated at every point, were compelled once more to turn to the Universities. In July 1930 the Communist Party of Great Britain adopted a lengthy resolution on the subject of India, clause 7 of which read as follows:—"The Party must work actively among the Indian residents in Britain (workers, sailors, students, etc.) and establish the best possible connections with India through them." All the party's subsidiary organisations, such as the British sections of the League Against Imperialism, the Educational Workers' International, and the Workers' Welfare League of India, were thereupon harnessed to the tasks laid down. Persistent endeavours were made, mainly by Saklatvala and Niharendu Datta Mazumdar, a law student from Mymensingh who had for several years been a full and active member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, to interest Indian students in the study of Communist theory. These efforts were in some measure rewarded in the summer of 1931 when contact was established with a sympathetic Indian student from which there sprang a loosely-organised body known as the University Students' Group. Meetings were held at irregular intervals in Niharendu Datta Mazumdar's house in London for the purpose of abstract discussions on Communism. The group was originally composed of a dozen members; all came of exceptionally good stock; all but two were of unimpeachable character prior to their leaving India, ten were Bengalis, and eight were related in one way or another to loyal servants of the Crown. Others who have recently joined the group are of the same mental and moral fibre and have the same family associations behind them. Their natural friends and associates both in India and at the English universities are numbered amongst those who have entered or are about to enter the highest branches of Indian services and the deliberate attempt to debauch these young Indians

before they reach the age of discretion is, therefore, the more subtle and the more dangerous.

Marxian Training in Berlin. With the ground prepared by Datta Mazumdar's theoretical training, invitations were proffered to members of the group to attend a month's course in Marxist theory in Berlin and were accepted by about half of the membership. The lectures were in English and appear to have embraced subjects as far removed from a study of Marxist theory as "the measures to be taken in India early next year (1932) in the event of the Round Table Conference failing to give satisfaction to the demands of the extremists, include organised terror, destruction of railway bridges, boycott of British goods, a campaign against Gandhi, etc."

Nirmal Sen Gupta and Kiron Chandra Basak. Thereafter, these students began to drift back to India. The first (and, as later proved to be the case, the most important) to return were Nirmal Sen Gupta and Kiron Chandra Basak. Neither lost any time in establishing touch with Communists in Calcutta but the former again left India after a stay of two months, bearing, for Moscow's consumption, a report on conditions in Bengal. Basak, to whose orthodoxy and reliability as a Communist recent tribute has been paid by Dharani Goswami and others of the prisoners at Meerut, remained on in Calcutta and, under the pseudonym of Dwipen Das, began his work on the lines laid down in Berlin and, so it now appears, dictated by Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya from Moscow. In March and April 1932 he dispatched to Nirmal Sen Gupta, who had by then returned to London, a series of reports written in an ingenious cipher the purport of which was as follows:—He had assumed control of the Workers' Party of Bengal ("a strong secret Communist party") and had made considerable headway in the way of increasing the membership. Members of his party had established some kind of a footing in eleven districts of Bengal, one of Bihar and Orissa, and one of Assam, before the end of April. The peasant "rebellion", which occurred at Hasnabad in the Tipperah district early in February 1932, was his party's work and he was giving harbour to Mukhleswar Rahman, a notorious

agrarian agitator and one of the chief absconders in the case arising therefrom. The strength of the party in this district was 100,000 and a militant programme of action for an All-Bengal Peasant League had been drawn up which was shortly to be printed and copies broadcast in thousands. Similar propaganda was being conducted through two weekly newspapers. A tax-collector had been murdered at Phultala in the Khulna district. No funds had so far reached him and his activities were seriously handicapped on this account.

Activities of Trained Students. A search of Basak's room at the beginning of May revealed the fact that, though much of what had been written was exaggerated, he had nevertheless been extremely active. He had associated with those others who had meanwhile returned (though not all of them proved true to their Berlin training) and had contrived to bring within his party a number of small existing terrorist organisations whose combined field of operations covered five districts of northern and western Bengal and one of Bihar and Orissa. He had almost certainly met the notorious absconder, Bepin Bihari Ganguli, the present head of the United Socialist Republican Party, and the two had given each other mutual promises of support. (Indeed, there was a veiled reference to this liaison in the cipher letters.) The rioting at Hasnabad was the direct result of incitement if not by Basak himself at least by those with whom he was working, and Basak's party was, in fact, harbouring Mukhleswar Rahman. Papers found during the search established the fact that his party's object was to educate the masses with a view to a combined rising at some future date but to eschew meanwhile methods of individual terrorism. All arms and ammunition were to be kept under the control of the central body for use at a time when a mass rising was feasible and advisable. This, it may be remarked, is precisely the line which Moscow's secret planning has been taking since the Oriental Section of the Executive of the Communist International evolved its notorious manifesto in 1929. One of the "tasks" prescribed therein was the steady collection and storing of arms in

a central *cache* and the training of the rank and file in their use and handling; instances of the execution of this policy are forthcoming from places as far apart as Jerusalem and Tokyo. Fortunately, the other members of this University group who returned to India showed a poor return for the amount of energy expended on their education and have, so it seems, taken little or no part in the propagation of Communist ideas up to the time of writing. It is impossible, however, to speak with any confidence of the future, for almost as I write, Niharendu Datta Mazumdar has himself returned and has busied himself with reviving the enthusiasm instilled in Berlin and with visiting the extant Communist organisations in the various provinces. He is to be followed in the very near future by Dharendra Mohan Shaha, who with Nirmal Sen Gupta has been conducting the London end of the party's activities, leaving Saklatvala free to obtain more recruits of the same intellectual and social standing, but from a wider residential range. Saklatvala's latest acquisitions include residents of three provinces hitherto untouched, and there are now numbered within the party's ranks representatives from Burma, Assam, Bihar and Orissa, the United Provinces, the Central Provinces and Bombay in addition to the initial Bengali element.

Mukhleswar Rahman. Though many of Basak's claims were exaggerated, some of his party's efforts met with a measure of success, as, for instance, those of one of its members—Mukhleswar Rahman. A few weeks after Basak's return to India, this professing Congressman lent his support to the establishment of workers' and peasants' parties in two or three districts in eastern Bengal. These parties were to be run on militant Communist-revolutionary lines and their aims were to be the abolition of the *zemindari* and capitalist systems with a mass armed rising all over the country in prospect. In Rahman's own particular district of Tipperah the dangers of such an organisation soon made themselves apparent. By the 13th February 1932 to so considerable a degree of strength had his organisation attained that Rahman thought he could safely lead a procession of peasants from the Tipperah and Noakhali districts through the streets of Hasnabad

in defiance of police orders to the contrary. A clash occurred and several peasants were killed and more wounded by the firing to which the police were compelled to resort. This incident, trivial though the passage of time may make it seem, is a clear indication of the direction in which the party's activities are leading. While but few of Rahman's dupes can have had the least idea of what Communism means many were found ready to lend their active support to a demonstration staged in direct defiance of constituted authority. In short, a beginning had been made in a corner of Bengal in the revolutionary "education of the masses".

A Clear Exposition of the Party's Aims.

The December (1932) issue of this group's London organ, *New Bharat* (or *Indian Front* as it now calls itself), gives a particularly clear idea of its real intentions when it remarks with reference to the Sholapur rioting in 1930 and similar disorders which occurred at about the same time:—"One of the lessons derived from the workers' risings is that when the workers break out in revolt and strike a blow, they strike unhesitatingly, decisively. They aim their blow at the very source of Imperialist oppression, at its State apparatus. But Imperialism still holds the day. It relies on its reserves of strength gathered during past decades. It will not be weakened until our national liberation movement is organised on the basis of a correct understanding of its tasks, draws in the widest masses of the country, leads boldly, and acts decisively. *The three requisites—organisation, a mass basis, and decisive action—must be fused together for the success of our revolution.* And this is the task of the party of the working class."

The Dangers of Success. It is in a party composed of such men and working on such lines that a grave danger lies ahead. For the trials and troubles of the Indian peasant are many, and he who seeks to ease their lot may well succeed in gaining not only their confidence but also their blind and unthinking devotion, even to the extent of bringing them to subscribe to a programme of the type of Subhas Bose's in which their task is to provide "cannon-fodder" for the troops while *bhadralog* volunteers "wreck the civil administra-

tion". The recent happenings in Singapore which were narrated in Chapter 13, and similar events in Japan during October 1932, have clearly shown, firstly that Moscow's efforts to pervert the intelligentsia are not confined to India, and secondly that the dangers attendant on her present recruiting policy cannot safely be disregarded.

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CHAPTER 21.

SIKH INTRANSIGENCE.

The Kabul Centre. A considerable portion of Chapter 6 was devoted to the doings in Afghanistan of members of the *Ghadr* Party, whose headquarters are in San Francisco. It was said there that the degree of welcome which this nominally independent organisation accorded to the tenets of Communism was regulated at any given time by the state of the party's purse. There was, moreover, an indication in that chapter that when Moscow's purse-strings were loosened, when Moscow's agents were tendering advice, and when Moscow's counsels prevailed, the Sikhs in Kabul presented a very much more formidable danger to India than when Stark and his colleagues were absent. This in itself would provide sufficient justification for including in a book on Communism the brief history of the *Ghadr* Party which it is my purpose to present. The pages which follow will attempt to show, however, how large a part the Communist International has played at one time or another in the growth and development of this dangerous Sikh association, and will, I hope, render unnecessary any apology on this particular score.

The Origin of the Ghadr Party: The Kabul centre having been disposed of, it is now necessary to examine, still with Moscow's machinations in mind, the party's activities from two other angles of vision—from San Francisco and from India. I cannot do better, as a beginning, than turn once more to Sir David Petrie's book, at pages 149 and 150 of which it is written:—“ This movement, which is in the nature of a continuing revolutionary conspiracy recruited largely from Sikhs, was founded by Har Dayal in the United States of America in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the War. In 1914-15 many thousands of these rabidly disloyal emigrants returned to India, where their violent activities cost many of them their lives and still more their liberty. The movement was suppressed during the

War but has never been stamped out, and there are still in the Punjab many returned Sikhs whose bitter hatred of our rule predisposes them to join with eagerness in any conspiracy aimed at the subversion of our authority. A subsidiary movement, confined to the Punjab, was the *Babbar Akali* campaign of 1922-23, when a band of Sikhs, of the professional gunman and ruffian type, ran amuck throughout two large districts in the central Punjab, ruthlessly murdering loyalists and Government supporters and establishing a widespread reign of terror. This smaller conspiracy was also suppressed by law, and although full retribution was exacted from those found guilty of participation, there was naturally a considerable remnant on which justice could not lay its hand. Sikhs of the *Ghadr* persuasion, whether in America, India, or elsewhere, have ever been ready to league themselves with any of our enemies, almost without waiting to be asked."

Early Communist Connections. The Fourth Congress of the Communist International, which met at Moscow in November 1922, was attended by two representatives of the *Ghadr* Party in San Francisco, one being the late Santokh Singh as "a delegate from India", and the other Rattan Singh of whom mention has been made elsewhere. In May 1923, they left for India, "financed to a moderate extent by the Communist International". Their mission was to work, at the Indian end, the schemes formulated in Kabul which included the formation of secret revolutionary societies cloaked as communal organisations, the fomenting of trouble amongst the independent Frontier tribes, the assassination of British officers, and the training of young Sikhs in foreign military schools. The moment was opportune, for not only was the nucleus in Kabul in a flourishing condition, thanks mainly to Russian and Afghan assistance, but the *Akali* Sikh movement was then at its greatest intensity and feeling everywhere at a high pitch. During a short sojourn in India these two desperadoes succeeded in enlisting the help of a fair number of Sikhs and of Sachindra Nath Sanyal, of terrorist notoriety, and another Bengali before they were account-

ed for—Santokh Singh being arrested in suspicious circumstances in tribal territory at the end of 1923 and released on security, while Rattan Singh, deeming it wiser to break back, eventually found his way for a second time to America.

Doings in America. The formation of the *Ghadr* Party in San Francisco in 1911 naturally led to a considerable increase of activity amongst disaffected Indians working in California and neighbouring states. Shortly after war was declared in August 1914, serious attempts were made by the Germans to turn this agitation into channels favourable to themselves, and the result was a very dangerous and a very widespread Indo-German conspiracy which the British authorities in England, India, and elsewhere were at considerable pains to counteract. Their efforts were substantially rewarded in more ways than one, amongst them the prosecution of a number of the most prominent of the party's leaders at San Francisco in 1915. Although there is very little of concrete result to show for this case, yet it forced many prominent conspirators into hiding in different parts of the world and, to that extent, dislocated the party's schemes. The enemy's plots were thus rendered largely inoperative and, when the Armistice was signed, the Sikh movement again fell into the background. There it remained till the early days of 1925, when, to use Sir David Petrie's simile, the shutters were again taken down, money was plentiful, enthusiasm was unbounded, fresh members were joining, and activity was everywhere discernible. It was strongly believed, though there was no positive proof of it, that the Soviet Government had come to the succour of the *Ghadr* Party in its extremity. Evelyn Roy, M. N. Roy's American wife, had certainly gone there at about that time as an emissary of the Communist International, and her presence in the States seems to have given a remarkable fillip to the moribund movement; and two years later evidence was forthcoming that the spirit of disloyalty amongst the Sikh population there was being powerfully stimulated by Moscow for her own purposes and that an extensive recruiting ground had been opened up for the

supply of disaffected Sikhs who were ready to serve under the red banner of Bolshevism. Nor is it very surprising that this should have been the case when it is recalled that M. N. Roy's arrival in Moscow had been preceded only a few months before by his arrest in the conspiracy case in which the *Ghadr* Party had been so deeply involved.

By the end of 1927, therefore, so great had been the spread of the *Babbar Akali* spirit amongst Sikhs in Canada and America (as evidenced not only by the character of the speeches delivered at Sikh meetings, but by intercepted correspondence and by the large sums of money remitted to India on behalf of the families of the "martyrs") that the position had deteriorated to what it was when the *Ghadr* agitation was at its height. The *Babbar Akali* cult connoted nothing less than the bitterest hostility to the British Government, backed by violence and bloodshed, and America and Canada had thus once more become a kind of forcing-bed for the production of the hot-headed and violent type of Sikh who provides such a ready tool in the hands of the Bolsheviks or others who wish to utilise him.

Rattan Singh's Activities. It may safely be presumed, therefore, that Rattan Singh's illegal return to America through Mexico early in 1925 was connected with this revival of activity. If his own statement to the American Immigration authorities, with whom he came into collision, is to be believed, another object of his visit would appear to have been the collection of funds, for he told them that he had collected forty or fifty thousand dollars from friends to send to the Society for Freedom for India, the object being "to set on foot a revolution in India". It is apparent also from his correspondence that he had arranged before his arrest for the dispatch of at least five Sikh students to the Communist training school in Tashkent. Rattan Singh eventually absconded from bail and escaped to Russia whence he came on viâ Kabul to India and was lost sight of.

Rattan Singh's Second Visit to India. There is reason to believe that, at a comparatively early stage

in the proceedings, the *Ghadr* Party became intolerant of M. N. Roy's control, and accordingly made independent negotiations direct with the Comintern. Thus it appears that one of the objects of Rattan Singh's second visit to India was to obtain a definite mandate from the *Akali Dal* for which the Comintern had asked. During a stay, which did not exceed six months, he visited several parts of the country, including Amritsar and Calcutta, and associated with known Communists wherever he went. There can be little doubt that he spent his time perfecting the Indian end of the schemes which he had been advancing in other parts of Europe, Asia, and America during the two previous years. The chief of these was probably that which concerned the remission of funds for revolutionary purposes, and it is known that during his brief stay in the country, a considerable amount of foreign money (not less than Rs. 50,000) was sent by one means or another to Sikhs in the Punjab, while the Amritsar *Kirti*, of which Santokh Singh (referred to earlier) was an editor up to the time of his death, was said to have some Rs. 40,000 to its credit in the middle of 1927. Rattan Singh left India in January 1927 for China whither he was sent by the American *Ghadr* Party to attempt to reconcile the conflicting Sikh parties and to reorganise revolutionary plans.

The *Kirti*. It may be noted here that the conspirators had intended from the very beginning to have an organ of their own. Rattan Singh, while still in America, had suggested the starting of the *Kirti*, and in his first letter he wrote " . . . the business can only be successful if the *Kirti* is successful. . . . We are trying to send money soon for this paper." In January 1926, the *Kirti* was advertised as follows:—" This journal will be the voice of Indian workers in America and Canada and will be dedicated to the sacred memory of those heroes and martyrs who awakened sleeping India . . . and whose ideal was regarded by our own people as well as by outsiders as the dream of Alnaschar. The journal will sympathise with all the workers throughout the world, . . . the subjugated, weak, and oppressed

nations, and subjugated India. Bhai Hardit Singh will be the editor . . . and Bhai Bhag Singh 'Canadian' and Santokh Singh 'American' will be its joint editors." A month later (and five months before Rattan Singh made his second appearance in India), the first issue appeared, bearing on its title-page the picture of a dead labourer lying on his funeral pyre amidst factories, fields, etc.,—the scene of his labours when alive—and surrounded with tools such as the hammer and pick-axe. The whole was obviously intended to convey the idea that the deceased had succumbed to the hard tasks he had had to perform during his lifetime. From then onwards, it has remained a communist paper, consistently advocating the organisation of workers and peasants for the overthrow of Capitalism, and has at the same time championed the cause and ideals of the *Ghadr* conspirators of 1914-15 and glorified the *Babbar Akalis* as martyrs and heroes. Of the group which controls the paper more will be said in the next few pages.

Sir David Petrie's Appreciation. So much, then, for the period covered by Sir David Petrie's *Communism in India, 1924-1927*, at pages 160-162 of which the following passage appears:—"The inquiry into these intrigues is still going on. Their course, as I have explained, is difficult to follow, for the reason that the conspirators themselves have no clear-cut ideas and, by their own showing, are making little headway. Nothing has come of the plan to promote frontier disturbances, or of the proposal to enlist the aid of the Bengal revolutionaries for a campaign of assassination, although Sachindra Sanyal paid several visits to the Punjab in 1924 and claimed to have enlisted many students of the Lahore colleges. In the same way, the scheme of sending students abroad for military training has never got beyond the placing at Constantinople of Teja Singh Sutantar, who has been used more as a post-box for correspondence than anything else. As a matter of fact, Sutantar, after passing his first year's examination, was expelled from the military college he was attending on the grounds of his not being a Turkish subject, and all the efforts of Fakhri Pasha, who was formerly Turkish Minister at Kabul and knew something of the doings of

Sutantar and his friends, for long failed to secure him re-admission. At no time have the facts, so far as ascertained, disclosed grounds for action in a court of law. The chief features are the marked revival of the *Ghadr* movement, till then a practically moribund organisation, and the dispatch in its behalf of five men to Russia; the long and laborious journey of Rattan Singh across Europe to India, and the starting of a strongly revolutionary and Communistic paper, the *Kirti*, with money which, there can be little doubt, has really been found from Russian sources. All these different events are clearly connected, and the intention of them is writ large on their surface. . . . Correspondence lately intercepted discloses lack of co-ordination, all-round stagnation, and a tendency to recrimination. The future of the "plot" is, therefore, not easily forecasted, as the attention of the *Ghadr* Party seems for the moment to have been distracted towards events in China. The revival, however, of a strong revolutionary spirit among the Sikhs in the United States and Canada and the growing cult of the *Babbar Akalis* afford considerable ground for uneasiness, for there is unquestionably in the Punjab an abundance of inflammable material if only the Soviet's agents could devise the means of effectively setting it alight."

A Diversion of Interest. A letter, written by Munshi Singh, secretary to the *Ghadr* Party in San Francisco, to a correspondent in Kabul early in 1927, had said:—"There is great need of work in China. Help is required. There our whole energy must be applied. There is a great need of a centre in China. Hence heavy expenses are being incurred this year." And so it came about that for the next year or so a great part of the American party's attention was diverted to China where Rattan Singh's efforts to bring about a reconciliation between the rival Sikh factions were watched with anxious interest by the leaders in San Francisco. A good deal of the party's funds and energy were absorbed and India was for a time correspondingly neglected.

The Sustenance of Effort in America. On the American side, however, there was no decline in

enthusiasm or energy. Assisted by other Indian agitators besides Sikhs, the party advanced from strength to strength and its membership increased by leaps and bounds until, at the end of 1928, it was stronger than ever in California and had plenty of money at its disposal. It was fervently spreading revolutionary ideas among the farmers and labourers in the hope of wringing more and more money from them to send to its subsidiaries in India and elsewhere.

A Short Relapse. This avarice quickly proved the party's own undoing, however, for a new organisation called the *Hindustan National Party* made its appearance on the stage composed of a number of Indians, who, although obvious extremists themselves, were opposed to the then management of the *Ghadr* Party. The new party's aims were to infuse a spirit of nationalism, to combat communalism and to discourage inter-provincial jealousies between Punjabis, Bengalis, Madrasis, etc. The inevitable disputes arose and even Gurmukh Singh, who made a special journey from Moscow to California for the purpose, was unable to settle them. Although the new party was not very long-lived, yet it served, while it lasted, to check the alarming growth of a movement of ill omen to India's peace and well-being. The *Ghadr* Party, once more an entirely Sikh organisation, survived and set itself to regain its former position. In May 1929, it acclaimed the murder of Mr. Saunders, the Assembly bomb outrage and other similar crimes committed by Sikhs in India as "the first sparks of conflagration which will shortly envelop India and will fulfil the long cherished hopes of the *Ghadrites*". From then onwards the party's propaganda, conducted mainly through the *Hindustan Ghadr*, took on a more strident note rising to a voluble crescendo when Bhagat Singh was hanged in Lahore in March 1931. The collections of funds on behalf of the *Kirti* and the *Ghadr* Parties also assumed large proportions and their influence in India had every appearance of growing stronger than ever.

A Revival of Plotting. Meetings were held in the latter half of 1929 at which there were discussions

on the possibility of starting guerilla warfare in India on Irish lines. Communications were also received from the *Ghadr* Party's representatives in Russia urging the American Sikhs to stir up trouble in India, and tentative proposals were made to overcome one obvious obstacle to the success of these plans by dispatching arms and ammunition to India and by teaching the art of the manufacture of bombs to returning emigrants. This orgy of plans and preparations synchronised with the arrival of Teja Singh Sutantar fresh from his course of military training in a Turkish academy, and there is no doubt that it was he who was responsible for the emphasis which was laid on the need for training the Party's members on up-to-date military lines. An aeroplane was actually purchased by the *Ghadr* Party and tuition was actually begun under Teja Singh's direction. A bomb manual was prepared, translated into Gurmukhi (the Sikh Punjab script), and circulated secretly to members of the *Ghadr* Party throughout the world. A series of articles from Teja Singh's pen also made its appearance in the party's organ, *Hindustan Ghadr*. All these activities received the prior approval of Moscow. A good deal of discussion centred during this period round the disposal of funds collected for the *Kirti* and allied purposes. Sikhs in various parts of the British Empire had sent in a part of the money asked of them for work in India and when news was received that full Dominion status might be granted in a comparatively short space of time there was found a small minority who advocated awaiting the results of the forthcoming Round Table Conference before spending the money on what might prove a wholly unnecessary revolution. To these, the more numerous extremists replied that their objective was complete freedom, for which many of their leaders had sacrificed their lives, and they would be satisfied with nothing short of complete independence.

Returning Emigrants. From November 1929 onwards, large batches of Sikhs, including both members of the *Ghadr* Party and others who were known to have subscribed to various anti-British funds, returned to India from the United States of America and Canada. Whether

their return in such unusually large numbers had any political significance or not it is difficult to say, but it may be taken as certain that a considerable number of the returned *émigrés* had received instructions prior to their departure to get into touch with Sikh extremists in the Punjab. Some, it is known, brought money with them; others conveyed instructions from the headquarters in San Francisco, and there was undoubtedly a leavening of those whose function it was to prepare and organise against the time when the receipt of arms and other sinews of war should give the signal that the day had arrived for raising the standard of revolt. Fortunately, the names of a large number of those most immediately involved in the conspiracy were known to the authorities in India, so that their powers for evil were seriously restricted by the attention of the police.

1930 Reactions in the United States of America. The spread of the civil disobedience movement in India in 1930 was responsible for imparting not only fresh impetus to the agitation in America, but also more definite shape to the party's plans, and there are many incidents to show the extreme interest which events in India evoked in California and Vancouver. Thus, in July of that year, a meeting was held in the Sikh Temple in Vancouver to discuss a proposal for the establishment of a " War Council ". While there was general agreement on the advisability of such a step, considerable discussion centred round the question of the functions of such a body in the matter of conducting Congress propaganda and the question was left in the air till a reference had been made to California. At a subsequent meeting, at which two visiting members of the *Ghadr* Party were present, it was decided that such a Council should be formed to conduct pro-Congress propaganda provided that its members always bore in mind the fact that the freedom of India was only to be obtained by revolution and a great sacrifice of life. If Gandhi succeeded in obtaining for India a Dominion constitution such as Canada enjoyed, these visitors said they would congratulate him, but the *Ghadr* Party's work would continue nevertheless; if he failed, the *Ghadr*

Party would take up the struggle from where he broke off. At the same time invitations were issued to any Indians in Canada, who wished to prepare themselves for the coming revolution in India, to visit the States and undertake any course that they might select from the *Ghadr* Party's military and explosives' expert, Teja Singh Sutar, by whose scanty training in Constantinople the party set such store. In response to this invitation, three young Sikhs went from Canada to the United States for the purpose mentioned. This information, it may be added, was entirely in keeping with a report received in India later in 1930 to the effect that efforts were being made from San Francisco to revive the *Ghadr* movement in Canada and that emissaries (one was a Russian or German who called himself G. M. Knight) were visiting the latter country with a view to enrolling Sikhs as members of the society. Such recruits were required to take an oath before they were initiated into the mysteries of bomb manufacture, the oath being to the effect that they bound themselves to "deal with" *jholi chuks* (Government supporters) on their return to India.

An Official Offensive. Teja Singh was ordered by the United States Immigration authorities to leave the country in January 1931 and he embarked on an extensive tour of the Sikh colonies in Panama, Brazil, and the Argentine, where he claims to have established vigorous branches of the party and to have collected large sums of money. Some part, at least, of these claims has been substantiated. Teja Singh's deportation was the beginning of a systematic campaign by the Immigration authorities, whose object was to deal with the question of Indians illegally residing in California and to break up the smuggling rings, some of which were known to be operated by the *Ghadr* Party. The prospect of such a campaign greatly alarmed the party's leaders, and any Indians who assisted the authorities as interpreters were openly threatened at the party's meetings where revolvers were freely drawn. Eventually a number of these interpreters were murdered and shooting affrays occurred almost every month. A state of terrorism vir-

tually prevailed in the Sikh colony in California and in only one case was the murderer arrested and brought to trial. The State officials in California, anxious that action should be taken against so dangerous an association, searched the party's offices on more than one occasion and arrested the president, Nidhan Singh. Representations were made to Washington that the party was a Communist organisation but, possibly for political reasons, the recommendations were not accepted in Washington and Nidhan Singh was ultimately released.

Moscow's Complicity. Of the *Ghadr* Party's connection with the Communist International there can hardly be any doubt. Apart from the indications sketched above of advice and financial and moral support given and received, two other facts cannot be gainsaid; facilities for journeys across Russia to and from Kabul were freely given to the party's emissaries, and at least six of the party's members are at present undergoing training in schools in Moscow.

Causes for Discouragement. The expulsion of Teja Singh and the subsequent need for caution on the part of the others, the barrenness of tangible results in India, the close and patient attention which the Punjab authorities paid to returning emigrants, the frustration of their schemes by official watchfulness and timely action, and a growing suspicion that the funds which they were sending to India were being diverted to improper uses, proved a fruitful source of disheartenment to the leaders in San Francisco. The position to-day has, therefore, vastly improved from the point of view of those who are charged with the maintenance of India's peace. But while it may be hoped that this improved state of affairs will continue for some time to come, it would be idle to expect that such a movement will die a natural death. On the contrary, more general acceptance will probably be found for the opinions expressed by several of the older Sikhs in Vancouver in 1930, namely, that even if Home Rule is accepted by the leaders in India, the younger generation of Sikhs will never be content without the complete separation of India from the British Empire and the substitution of a popu-

lar Government similar to that which obtains in Russia. There can clearly be no relaxation of official watchfulness so far as the *Ghadr* movement is concerned.

The Indian End. Sufficient has already been said in Chapter 6 of the *Ghadr* Party's penetration of India from the north and I will now pass on to an examination from the Indian end of the various schemes already revealed. By the middle of 1928, Rattan Singh's mission in China had ended in failure and India once more had begun to receive the undivided attention of the headquarters group in America. But it was some time, nevertheless, before there were reactions in the Punjab by any means commensurate with the revival of enthusiasm already noticed in the United States of America. In the meantime, the Punjab branch of the *Ghadr* Party had been re-named the *Kirti Kisan* Party after the notorious magazine of that name already referred to. Its professed aims and objects were: "(1) to achieve complete independence from British imperialism by employing every possible method in order to liberate the workers and peasants from political, economic, and social serfdom and to establish their united democratic power; (2) to organise the workers and peasants". The party's efforts were, however, mainly confined to the Lahore and Amritsar districts and did not at first command a very great measure of success. In mid-September 1928, for instance, Sohan Singh "Josh", of later notoriety as Phillip Spratt's Punjab accomplice, and Bhag Singh "Canadian" produced a flamboyant poster, which bore the unmistakable signs of Communist teaching, to advertise a Workers' and Peasants' Conference to be held at Lyallpur at the end of the month. The Conference was duly held but proved to be a very limited success. S. A. Dange, Spratt, Bradley, and a number of other attractive speakers had been billed to attend but no extra-provincial Communist of any importance put in an appearance. While the rural members of such an audience as there was undoubtedly appreciated the recitation of their grievances, the effect proved entirely ephemeral and the Conference failed conspicuously in its chief object which was to capture the support and sym-

pathy of the rural classes of a district with unenviable political traditions. On the other hand, Communist doctrines were proclaimed with more candour than on any previous public occasion and anti-Government and anti-British statements held strident sway.

Outside Assistance. Such early activities as there were, were built on the efforts of a few men such as Sohan Singh "Josh" with the outside support of George Allison and Phillip Spratt, and when the arrests prior to the Meerut case removed these props the structure thus built collapsed. It will be convenient to mention here another of Moscow's endeavours to assist this nascent movement in the Punjab. In August 1928, information was received in India that Harjap Singh and another Punjabi had recently left Moscow for India travelling *via* Afghanistan. Harjap Singh was one of the five Sikhs who left California for Moscow in January 1926 for instruction in Bolshevik propaganda and was, besides, one of the most dangerous members of the Sikh revolutionary conspiracy abroad. Fortunately, both he and his companion were arrested by the Afghan authorities while attempting to cross the Russo-Afghan border and their plans were thus frustrated for the time being. Since 1927, Harjap Singh had been contemplating a return and he actually visited Paris in the hope of obtaining a false passport. Santa Singh, another of the five students who accompanied Harjap Singh on this earlier venture, succeeded in getting away to India where he was captured and interned shortly after his arrival.

After Meerut. That the party was slow to recover from the effects of the Meerut arrests is shown by the fact that a meeting was held in the office of the *Kirti* in Amritsar in December 1929 with the object of "re-organising" the *Kirti Kisan* (Workers' and Peasants') Party, the implication being that nothing had been done in the recent past. The work of formulating new aims and objects was entrusted to a sub-committee and it was decided to hold an All-India *Kirti-Kisan* Conference at Lahore at the same time as the annual session of the All-India National Congress. As it so happened, this latter

conference proved to be a new turning-point in the party's career.

The Lahore Congress. Held in an atmosphere surcharged with violent revolutionary feeling the like of which India had probably not seen since the Mutiny, the Conference inevitably called forth an unprecedented amount of enthusiasm for the Communist programme which it advocated. Many extremist bodies, of which the *Kirti-Kisan* Party was but one, held miniature Congresses of their own and discussed and passed hundreds of resolutions, many of them of an extremely violent character. All such showed themselves ready vigorously to pursue any activities which Gandhi and the Congress chose to prescribe, provided they were capable of being conducted into revolutionary channels, but they were clearly intolerant of the control even of such hot-heads as Jawahar Lal Nehru then showed himself to be. Although much of the artificial excitement engendered at Lahore evaporated when those present there had dispersed to their homes, yet the proceedings gave considerably more lasting impetus to all extremist movements and to all activities comprised within the expression coined there, "dangerous thinking and dangerous living".

Civil Disobedience. There can be no doubt that the body which emerged from the Lahore Congress under the name of the Indian National Congress was the product of an alliance between extremists and revolutionaries, such as the *Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha* and the *Kirti-Kisan* Party, or that, among the methods brought into play by the new orientation of the Congress creed, were the exploitation of the prevailing *Kirti-Kisan* sentiments and the employment of youths and students to work on their behalf. This being so, it is hardly surprising that it is a matter of extreme difficulty to disentangle from the history of the next few months the part played by each of the forces contributing to disorders which affected the Punjab no less than the rest of India. By no means can it be said that the general body of the Sikhs worked with the Congress, but the attitude of this virile community occasioned many anxious moments, particularly after their Sisganj temple in Delhi had been

accidentally struck by police buckshot in May 1930, and there were several indications that the earlier teachings of the *Kirti* group had not fallen entirely on barren ground and that, in certain places, Communist ideas had begun to leaven the minds of the Sikh peasantry. Indeed, the return of large numbers of Sikh emigrants at this time caused the *Kirti* Party to talk on more than one occasion of a revival of the *Babbar Akali* movement and to request the parent body in America to support the venture with more men and more money. On the whole, it may be said of this period that the *Ghadr* Party was content to let the Congress undermine the Government while it, for its part, extended its influence amongst the Sikh peasant population. And it may be taken as fairly certain that had the civil disobedience movement produced a sufficiently chaotic state of affairs, the *Ghadr* Party, with Moscow at its back, would certainly have stepped in and attempted to use the Congress movement for its own ends with the ultimate object of absorbing it.

Harjap Singh Again. Dismayed by this seeming absence of activity in India (as has been explained, such as there was was quite indistinguishable from the more general Congress movement), the *Kirti* Party's masters in America sent Harjap Singh again to India in June 1930, and on this occasion he successfully evaded the attention of the authorities and arrived in the Punjab when the civil disobedience movement was almost at its height. His mission was to report on the uses to which *Ghadr* funds were being put; to organise *Kirti* groups in the villages; to select young Sikhs for military training in Moscow; to spy on military organisations in the Punjab; to suborn the Indian troops, if possible, and generally to prepare for an open armed revolution. He contrived to avoid arrest until he eventually visited his home in the Hoshiarpur district in the middle of April 1931 and the patience of the local police was at last rewarded. He is now interned as a State prisoner under Regulation III of 1818. Another *Ghadr* conspirator from California was also apprehended at about the same time. His work consisted of improving the connection between India and Kabul.

Dasaundha Singh. While these two were working secretly, the open organisation of the *Kirti-Kisan* Party was being carried on more vigorously than ever by Dasaundha Singh, an active member of the main party with both American and Chinese experience behind him. He had been sentenced in 1926 by the Supreme Court in Shanghai to one year's imprisonment for being in possession of seditious literature and for inciting disaffection among the King's subjects. He was deported to India on the expiry of this sentence and was dealt with on arrival under Regulation III of 1818 in the same manner as was Harjap Singh some three years later. He was, however, released from confinement in April 1929, whereupon he quickly stepped into the shoes which Sohan Singh "Josh" had perforce left empty a month earlier.

The Karachi Congress. By March 1931 the *Kirti-Kisan Sabha*, as it then came to be called, was in a flourishing condition. Together with its ally, the aggressively revolutionary *Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha*, from which it was hardly distinguishable, it organised a joint conference to be held at Karachi simultaneously with the annual session of the All-India National Congress. The aims of these two *sabhas* were very closely allied, differing only in the extent to which each was prepared to come into line with the Congress, and it soon became clear that both were equally dissatisfied with Mr. Gandhi's "surrender" to Lord Irwin in March 1931. It was clear, too, that the combined movement made a considerable appeal to those "political" prisoners who had been released as a result of that "surrender" and that the strength of both parties was being greatly reinforced thereby. In an article which appeared in the official organ of the *Kirti-Kisan Sabha* just prior to the Karachi Congress, Mr. Gandhi was severely criticised for overlooking the interests of the workers, and the villagers were called upon to start their own *sabhas* throughout the Punjab and to struggle for the rights of their class against the "atrocities" perpetrated by executive officials as well as capitalists, both Indian and British. Two days before the Congress was actually

held, it seemed that Mr. Gandhi's stock had fallen so low that he would never be able to stave off the attacks of extremist enemies whose violent press and platform campaign against him had exceeded all previous bounds. His ultimate triumph is a matter of history upon which I need not dilate here. Suffice it to say that the *Kirti-Kisan* Party emerged from its defeat at Karachi a strong and virile body, no longer a mere subsidiary of the Congress, but turning rather to Moscow for its inspiration and support. It will possibly never be known how much the party owed for this to Kabul's two emissaries, Gurmukh Singh and Wasdev Singh, who, it will be recalled, were in Karachi at the time.

The Aftermath of Karachi. For two months thereafter, the peasant problem in the Punjab, made worse by the then prevailing economic depression, gave rise to grave apprehension and cause for constant official watchfulness. It was feared that a movement such as that which the *Kirti* Party sought to initiate would occasion considerable embarrassment to the authorities, even if they were able to thwart the party's known intention of doing something "practical".

The Collapse of the Movement. But at the end of May, the Government of the Punjab announced certain remissions of revenue which undoubtedly came as a very real relief to that section of the agricultural population which had been hardest hit and which was, therefore, most susceptible to Communist promises of a Utopia in the making. Although the *Kirti-Kisan* Party made strenuous efforts both to take credit for these remissions and to decry them as niggardly, yet there can be no doubt that Government's gesture took much of the wind from the party's sails. The process of emasculation thus begun was continued by a series of judicious arrests and prosecutions and a prudent use of the preventive sections of the law. Thus, by the end of the year, what had shown early promise of being a most dangerous movement, had been so weakened by official pressure of one kind or another that the achievement of even a part of its objects was placed beyond the bounds of practical politics. The failure of a conference held at Sargodha in January

1932, to which leaders from outside the province had been invited, marked the virtual end of a campaign which had been fraught with the most serious dangers to the peace of the Punjab and possibly of India as a whole. The *Kirti-Kisan Sabha's* preachers had, however, penetrated almost every village in the Sikh districts and had taken to the cultivators doctrines which might well have been expected to make an appeal in the temporarily impoverished areas where they were preached. That they failed to do so is due as much to the Government's counter-attack as to the fact that much of the propaganda used was far above the heads of the simple rustics for whose consumption it was concocted.

Conclusion. From the foregoing position the party has not as yet recovered. A series of conferences held at the close of 1931 proved a comparative failure when viewed in the light of earlier events at Karachi and, despite the more recent efforts of Bhag Singh "Canadian" to extend the sphere of the party's influence and activities to Calcutta, Karachi, and Jamshedpur and to other places where Sikh colonies exist, the *Kirti* movement of to-day cannot be said to be a force seriously to be reckoned with. That it may become so in the future if its efforts to reorganise are not nipped in the bud, is certainly not beyond the range of possibility. The flow of propaganda from America has not ceased nor have Rattan Singh's new schemes matured. Wasdev Singh is at large in India and there are many more dangerous even than he in California ready to follow him when the propitious moment arrives. There is ample evidence, over and above that which has already been recorded, that these activities in the Punjab were the direct result of pressure and assistance from the *Ghadr* headquarters in San Francisco, which can, in its turn, rely on Moscow's ready support and advice. Dogged persistence and unbending intransigence are marked characteristics of all schemes formulated there, and such schemes can be frustrated only by equal persistence and equal energy on the official side. Failure in this respect can have but one result, and the murders in San Francisco in the early part of 1931 have given us a glimpse of what that result will be.

CHAPTER 22.

RUSSIAN TRADE IN INDIA.

The Purpose of Russian Trade. I have dealt in an earlier chapter with Moscow's attempts to penetrate almost all the countries of the East through her multifarious trading organisations and it is now only necessary to mention a few instances of similar tactics in India. It is certainly not my intention to suggest that the expansion of Russian trade, in whatever direction, has for its sole object the extension of the sphere of the Comintern's sinister influence. Not only is such a dogma absurd but it is also against the facts. Russia, no less than other industrial countries of the world, must have a market for her products. But there is this difference between the Soviet economic policy and that of the more normal world, that wherever her products find their way thither follow, sooner or later, Moscow's political emissaries. The structure of the Soviet Government (which holds a monopoly of Russian trade) is so inextricably interwoven with that of the Communist International, and every phase of Soviet activity is so bound up with Communist politics that this succession of events is inevitable. As an instance may be given the state of affairs in Shanghai at the end of 1928 when it was definitely established that every Soviet commercial establishment there had a member of the Russian Communist Party at its head whatever his business knowledge.

It is, therefore, my purpose in this chapter to give a few examples in support of the thesis that every Russian trade agent or concern coming to India must be regarded as a potential Communist agent, rather than to advocate the wholesale suppression of every attempt at Russian infiltration. As an American Senator wrote in a dissenting minute to the Fish Committee Report, "Communist aims and methods arouse our righteous indignation, yet we should proceed to put the needed reforms into effect sanely and sensibly, without hate or haste or hysteria. . . . Let us neither burn down the barn nor throw the baby out with the bath."

Centrosoyus. Information was received early in 1931 that arrangements were being made in Shanghai in preparation for the "dumping" there, via Vladivostok, of Russian timber, benzine and wheat. Much of this was to be shipped onwards to India by the vessels of British lines operating in the Far East. The organisation responsible for these transactions was Centrosoyus, a well-known Russian company with its headquarters in London, with ramifications all over the Far East and an influential and one-time reputable British politician in charge of it. Of its Communist taint there can be no doubt, for the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. themselves decreed in 1927 that the question of breaking off trade operations with Chinese firms operating in the territory under the administration of the Nanking Government should be left open in so far as it concerned Centrosoyus in view of the I.K.K.I.'s decision to use that organisation for their own purposes. There is no evidence that anything came of this "dumping" scheme but the fact remains that at about the same time fresh endeavours were made to introduce Russian trade agents into India. Such attempts had previously been made prior to 1929 but had been largely frustrated by official watchfulness in spite of the fact that the company in question had as its Indian agents the Asiatic Trading Corporation in Calcutta. Two representatives did, however, make their way into India during 1928 and one of them, Boaz Wolffson, was found, after he had arrived, to be a full member of the Russian Communist Party. In February 1931, therefore, an application was received for facilities to enable four alleged tea experts (all of Russian extraction) to visit tea-gardens in various parts of India. The British director referred to above had induced a prominent tea-garden owner in the south of India to recommend the grant of passport facilities to these four individuals and facilities were on the point of being given when it was discovered that their real object was to pick the brains of Indian tea-growers in order that the rival tea-growing area which the Soviet Government has inaugurated in Georgia might benefit accordingly. They were also to be accompanied by a certain Dr. Harold Mann, who,

originally no more than an agricultural expert, had fallen into the clutches of known Communists such as S. D. Saklatvala and R.F.O. Bridgeman. Of the political views of the four Russian experts nothing is known but much may be presumed.

Russian Oil Products. In 1928 it was reliably reported that the Soviet authorities were attempting to establish branches of Russian Oil Products (whose headquarters are also in London) in India, primarily for political reasons; and, though inquiries made at the time failed to show that any such agencies had been established, there was some evidence that attempts were being made by Indian firms to procure contracts for Russian oils from Russian Oil Products in London. Later, in 1930, there arrived in Bombay a Soviet trade agent named Felix Bauer through whose agency a number of contracts for Russian oils were concluded with Indian firms.

From these small beginnings there sprang at the end of 1931 a private company with an original capital of some fifteen lakhs of rupees named the Western India Oil Distributing Company with its headquarters in Bombay. None of its proprietors was politically objectionable. As a result of negotiation in Moscow during 1931, the firm's first consignment of 75,000,000 gallons of Russian petrol arrived from Batum at the end of August 1932. Although prolonged inquiries which have recently been made throughout India show that the W.I.O.D.C. at present does nothing more than buy Russian petrol in the normal way and sell it at its own risk, yet there is cause for the suspicion that this will not always be the case. When the Burma Shell Company reduced its prices in Bombay, the Company again dispatched one of its proprietors to England and Moscow to obtain better terms and information received makes it fairly certain that he has managed to obtain a monopoly of the sale of Russian oils in India.

During his absence, operations in India began on the assumption that his mission would be a success and that the concern would live in spite of the Burma Shell Company's efforts. Storage depôts, sidings and pipe-lines were erected or acquired in Bombay, Madras, and

Karachi and in certain of the State ports in Western India while negotiations for the acquisition of land were also undertaken in Calcutta. Although the majority of persons to whom agencies have been given have never come to unfavourable notice (some, indeed, are renowned for their loyalty to the Crown), yet it is a significant fact that amongst the large number of persons from whom inquiries have come not a few are known political suspects (Congressmen, Communists and nondescript agitators), while an important Communist is said to have remarked that the Company's profits would be spent on Communist propaganda and that known Communists should not visit the Company's premises openly lest the attentions of the police might be attracted thereto. It seems probable that the mere name of Russia has proved attractive to people of this class and there is no good reason to suppose that in the organisation now being set up business interests are, on the whole, being subordinated to politics. If the two happen to coincide that is a different matter.

Russian Piecegoods. Another recent development which has dangerous possibilities is a Soviet endeavour to capture the piecegoods trade of India. Assiduous attempts are now being made to undersell her rivals by offering her goods at ridiculously low prices. Many recent cases have come to notice of such goods being imported into India viâ Peshawar, Gilgit, and Leh; and Russian cloth valued at millions of rupees is said to be in readiness at Yarkand and Chitral awaiting a favourable opportunity for dispatch to India. The Soviet Trade Agency in Kashgar has offered special terms to Turki traders, several of whom have expressed their readiness to export Russian goods to India. One result of the recent signing of the Sino-Russian Trade Agreement in Sinkiang is clearly to be a large and steadily increasing export of Soviet manufactured piecegoods to India. The trade itself is probably negligible, but the history of every other Eastern country has shown that the opportunities which such an organisation presents for the spreading of subversive doctrines and propaganda is by no means inconsiderable.

Unofficial Apprehensions. It is, however, gratifying to find that the Government is not, so it would seem, to be left to play a completely lone hand (as is unfortunately so often the case in India) in countering this insidious movement. For an unofficial resolution has very recently been tabled in the Legislative Assembly recommending to the Government that legislation be introduced without delay to enable prompt executive action to be taken to protect indigenous industries against the effects of the "dumping" of goods from foreign countries which, "by reason of their depreciated exchanges, bounties, subsidies, or other artificial circumstances", may be sold in India at cut-throat prices. Almost identical resolutions have been tabled by a large number of other unofficial members, Hindus, Muslims, and Europeans. If Moscow's new tactics result in an awakening of public opinion to the dangers of her creed and policy, they will be welcome indeed and will serve a purpose very different from that which the Soviet Government intended. It remains to be seen, however, whether this clamour is directed solely against Japanese cotton goods or whether it embraces Russian oil as well. In particular, it is yet to be discovered whether political opinion, as represented by the Legislative Assembly, will be prepared to go the length of advocating the imposition of a customs duty on foreign merchandise brought across India's land frontiers. At present all land-borne goods from the north and east are imported duty free.

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PART FOUR:

Conclusions.

CHAPTER 23.

INDIA'S LEGAL ARMOURY AGAINST COMMUNISM.

Conspiracy. It now remains to examine the weapons with which the authorities in India have been equipped to enable them to combat this dangerously insidious movement. For several years the weapon most commonly used was section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code which provides for the infliction of a maximum sentence of transportation for life on two or more persons who conspire to deprive the King-Emperor of the sovereignty of British India. It soon became apparent, however, that the value of this section, at first a useful means of bringing offenders to speedy justice, had been seriously impaired when the seeds sown at Cawnpore and fostered by Bhagat Singh at Lahore bore fruit at Meerut in 1930 and 1931. Mention has been made in an earlier chapter of M. N. Roy's criticism of the failure of the accused at Cawnpore to extract even a modicum of advertisement from their trial. Bhagat Singh made no such mistake. The prisoners' dock became a political forum and the countryside rang with his heroics. His photograph was on sale in every city and township and for a time rivalled in popularity even that of Mr. Gandhi himself. His antics and those of his confederates eventually succeeded in bringing the ordinary law to a standstill and in reducing the courts to a state of impotence, and it became necessary in 1930 for the Governor-General to promulgate a special Ordinance without which their trial might never have been brought to a conclusion. Bhagat Singh's discovery was not without its effect on the other large conspiracy case which was proceeding at Meerut at the time, and, although this latter case never attracted such attention in India as did its contemporary at Lahore, the Communists concerned in it have nevertheless done their utmost to exploit its propaganda value to the fullest. The defence statements, little more than Communist theses supplemented by political harangues, have been printed up in pamphlet form by the Com-

munist Party of Great Britain under orders from Moscow and broadcast to Communists in the British Isles and abroad. Copies naturally found their way to India where a reprint of parts of the statements has recently been made.

Cumbrous Procedure. Much of the trouble was undoubtedly caused by the existence of amendments made to the Code of Criminal Procedure by a succession of Legislative Assemblies, each of which seemed to vie with its predecessor in devising new methods of undermining the authority of the Courts. One such amendment which compelled the presiding magistrate or judge to adjourn the proceedings at the dictates of one or other of the counsel did particular harm in this way. Of this section a Justice of the Calcutta High Court wrote in a judgment in 1931 that while it remained on the Statute book there was no reason why any defendant need ever be convicted and, conversely, no reason why any complainant should ever allow him to be acquitted. The section in question [526 (8)] has recently been amended and, to that extent, the position has improved, but four costly years of the Meerut Conspiracy Case and what shows promise of being an equally expensive terrorist conspiracy case now proceeding in Delhi have made it clear that more effective means must be found of grappling with Communism than the invocation of the cumbrous legal processes which surround a charge of large-scale conspiracy.

Seditious Speeches and Writings. Profiting by the experience of the past, each Indian province has tackled the problem in its own particular way. In Bombay, where the position has probably been the most acute, resort has been had to various sections of the existing law. The public advocacy of Communist doctrines has been countered by judicious prosecutions under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code, which provides for a maximum sentence of transportation for life for those who bring or attempt to bring into hatred or contempt, or excite or attempt to excite 'disaffection towards His Majesty or the Government established by law in British India.' It is a pleasing testimony to the

success of these and other similar efforts on the part of the authorities that in all the maelstrom of harsh words written and spoken by Communists in Bombay in the days that immediately followed the pronouncement of judgment at Meerut, there was hardly an instance of an attack on British Imperialism as such. All references were to Imperialism generally. But while it is gratifying to see persistent efforts rewarded almost as much harm can be done by general as by specific incitement, and there are obvious disadvantages in a law which permits malefactors to evade it by so simple a ruse as that which is now becoming apparent in Bombay.

Promotion of Class-Warfare. Latterly also, attempts have been made to include the speeches of Communist leaders in Bombay in the category of "promotion of feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes of His Majesty's subjects" *in pari materia* (namely, the workers and peasants on the one hand and the capitalists and landlords on the other) which is an offence punishable under section 153-A of the Indian Penal Code with two years' rigorous imprisonment. A number of such cases which were instituted as a result of speeches made on "May Day" 1932 were at first successful, and those who made them were convicted by the Chief Presidency Magistrate and sentenced each to a year's imprisonment.

The Difficulties of Definition. When an appeal from one such case was lodged in the High Court, however, the Bench which heard it agreed with the Chief Presidency Magistrate that it was not possible to limit the application of the section in question merely to classes of the community divided either by race or religion, but at the same time found considerable difficulty in discovering a satisfactory definition of the word "capitalist" which it described as "altogether too vague a phrase to denote a definite and ascertainable class within the meaning of section 153-A". After discussing the literal sense of the word which, he said, meant "anyone who possesses any accumulated wealth", the Chief Justice went on to say: "On that definition practically everybody will be within the capitalist class. No doubt in

the region of economic discussion capitalists are referred to in some limited sense. In reference to divisions between capital and labour the capitalist generally means a person with a considerable amount of property invested in industry. But if you take any definition of that sort, it is impossible to say what amount of capital would bring a man within the class. He might be within the class one day and without it the next. He may be a capitalist in one country and not in another." The accused person was, therefore, acquitted on this charge while a concurrent sentence passed by the Chief Presidency Magistrate under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code was considerably reduced.

Conflicting Opinions. This decision was naturally followed by other appeals most of which were similarly rewarded, though it is worthy of record that a dissenting judgment in one such case (where the appellant's attack had been on British capitalists and landlords) found that the speaker could "only have meant the British investors in Indian securities and traders in India a class or sub-class to which his audience did not belong". In this judge's opinion, too, the division between landlords and tenants was "sufficiently clear-cut to justify their being termed separate and distinct classes". As, however, a concurrent sentence had been passed under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code the judge in question did not press his objection and the appeal was allowed in so far as it related to section 153-A of the Indian Penal Code.

A Sufficiently Clear Case. Yet another case came up on appeal at the end of 1932 and was heard by a Bench over which the Chief Justice again presided. The Bench found that the speech complained of in this instance constituted "a virulent attack against the propertied classes in India" and that the man who made it had "shown from the context that he used the expression 'capitalist' in a narrow and restricted sense". The actual words used are of some importance and may profitably be quoted: "In India your Rajahs and Maharajahs and Zamindars and Capitalists also make friends with big bankers and loot both peasants and labourers".

Of this passage the Chief Justice wrote: "It is clear, I think, from that passage that he is using the word 'capitalist' in the sense merely of financiers or bankers and he makes that quite clear later on because he says that the labourers of the world number $15\frac{1}{2}$ annas in the rupee and that the capitalists are quite a small class. Even if we hold that the word 'capitalist' as used in this speech is not a sufficiently well-defined class, it is quite clear that Rajahs, Maharajahs and *Zamindars* are a sufficiently definite class to come within section 153-A."

The Present Position. I make no apology for having dealt at so great length with a single section of the Indian law, for the discovery of this valuable legal weapon in the armoury of those whose duty it is to combat Communism had raised hopes that trials such as those undertaken at Meerut might be relegated to the lumber room of the past. The earlier rulings in Bombay, therefore (authoritative for the time being where the courts of that Presidency were concerned and carrying considerable weight in the courts of other provinces also), raised grave doubts as to the real value of a prosecution, the success or failure of which hung upon the precise definition of a single word, and of a section of the law which gave to those whose activities the authorities sought to bring within it so wide a margin of safety. Those qualms still remain to some extent though the High Court's more recent dicta have made it clear that there are circumstances in which the stock phrases which Communists are wont so glibly to use in their speeches and writings can be comprised within the *ex hypothesi* indefinite and unascertainable classes to which, in fact, they undoubtedly refer. It remains to be seen how long it will take such speakers to adapt the precise form of their fulminations to the requirements of the law as now expounded. Meanwhile the value of the new weapon remains largely unimpaired so far as the rest of India is concerned.

Moscow to the Rescue. It was, perhaps, the irony of fate which caused Moscow herself to give us the very definition which the Bombay High Court was at such pains to discover. The first section of the Soviet

Constitution reads: "Since the time of the formation of the Soviet Republics, the States of the world have been divided into two camps: the camp of capitalism and the camp of socialism". In the course of his voluminous writings, which every true Communist will admit carry the weight of law, Lenin described as "proletarians" (*i.e.*, those in the latter of these two camps) "those whose income is in danger of falling below the subsistence minimum". All others are capitalists. It is also a fact that the franchise in Soviet Russia, the *doyen* of proletariat countries, is based on the reasoning that all the occupational groups whose members live exclusively by "the sale of their labour power" are members of the proletariat. All those against whom proceedings were instituted in Bombay were professing Communists and it is clearly in these senses, and not in accordance with the usage of the English language, that they used the terms on which the complaints against them were based.

A Canadian Parallel. It is of some interest to learn in this connection that the Supreme Court of Ontario had no doubts when faced with a question almost identical with that with which the Bombay High Court had to deal. On the 13th November 1931, the Honourable Mr. Justice Wright passed sentence at Ontario on Timothy Buck and seven other members of the Communist Party of Canada. In the course of his charge to the jury he remarked that "this Communist Party of Canada divides the people of Canada into two classes—the proletariat which they say are all wage-earners, and the *bourgeoisie* who are outside that classification and would include property owners, farmers, men who conduct their own business, and all the other classes. There is a third or middle class called the petty bourgeoisie which I think includes merchants and others; but for general purposes their classification is the proletariat on the one side and the *bourgeoisie* on the other. In a democratic country such as this, when a man may be a proletarian to-day, and to-morrow may be a bourgeois, and the reverse, is it a just, proper, lawful thing to set one of these classes against the other? Is it just

and proper to stress and to advocate a struggle of one class to destroy the other? ”.

Communism, a Species of Treason. Though it may not be strictly relevant to the subject of which this chapter treats, yet I cannot fail to quote another short passage from the record of this interesting Canadian case. Immediately before pronouncing sentence upon them, the judge addressed the accused in the dock as follows:—“ You have not been criminals in the ordinary sense, but I do not regard you as political criminals. Your offence is of an entirely different nature from that of a political criminal; it strikes at the very foundation of our social and governmental fabric in this country. It is a species of treason which is one of the most detestable offences of which any person can be found guilty ”. The cry was frequently heard both in and out of the Court at Meerut that the accused in the recent conspiracy case were being prosecuted for their political opinions and it is interesting to know that legal opinion in another part of the Empire coincides with that in India, however unconvincing such opinions may be to those who hold all Imperialist Courts in abhorrence.

The Calcutta Carters' Strike. A case of more than usual interest, no less from the legal point of view than because it signalled a new departure in Communist tactics, was the Calcutta Carters' Strike in 1930 of which very brief mention has been made in chapter 19. To facilitate a right appreciation of the points involved, I give a short synopsis of the events which led up to and followed the rioting which Sir Charles Tegart, the then Commissioner of Police, described as the fiercest which he had ever seen in Calcutta. On the 1st April new rules came into force which imposed restricted loads on buffalo carts and prohibited the working of buffaloes between the hours of noon and 3 p.m. Two days earlier a crowded meeting of carters had been held in one of the public parks addressed by the leaders of the newly-formed Carters' Union, three of them Communists and a fourth a well-known Labour agitator. It was decided that the carters should refuse to unyoke their buffaloes when ordered to do so and should defy the rule to that

effect and court arrest. The speakers also instigated their audience to refuse to pay fines in court and, as it afterwards appeared, to congregate on the Howrah Bridge and to leave their carts in the roadway. The leaders in question later visited the *kathals* (bullock-cart depôts) and tendered much the same advice.

At noon on the 1st April, therefore, the large number of carters who were as usual plying their carts in the immediate surroundings of the Howrah Bridge unyoked their animals and removed the wheels from their carts, thus forming a regular series of barricades across the streets. Other streets over a wide area were simultaneously obstructed with Corporation dust-bins, road metal, bales of merchandise, corrugated iron sheets, and iron rails in a manner which places beyond all doubt the fact that some central organisation was responsible for the whole occurrence. The police who attempted to remove the obstructions met with a fusillade of brickbats, pieces of road metal and iron bars not only from the carters who had entrenched themselves behind their barricades but also from the occupants of neighbouring houses, and were only able to clear the area of rioters after repeated resort to rifle and revolver fire. Communist in origin, the fight was taken up by the Congress as well, a fact which is proved by a series of entirely unprovoked attacks by students which occurred later in the evening (some two hours after the main riot had been quelled) in the collegiate area remote from the seat of the earlier disturbances. A report written a fortnight later spoke of the police as having been "kept continuously on the run since the 1st" and stated that "the intention of our opponents is obviously to run the police to a standstill and to tamper with their loyalty". The events of the intervening period, though no less serious from the Government's point of view, are, however, less germane to the present restricted theme than is the original outbreak; for the carters had learned their lesson and from the 2nd April onwards the Communist leaders had to rely to an increasing extent on the Congress rank and file for the furtherance of their aims. I refer to the subsequent developments only because they point to one of the dangers of allowing Communism to succeed.

Incitement to Rioting. Meanwhile six Communist leaders had been arraigned before the Chief Presidency Magistrate on charges of conspiracy and abetment of an unlawful assembly and rioting by more than ten persons (section 117 read with sections 143 and 147, and section 120B of the Indian Penal Code). All six were in due course sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment (the maximum punishment provided by the Code being three years' rigorous imprisonment) and were ordered to furnish substantial security for their good behaviour for a period of three years after release. Three were subsequently acquitted by the High Court, but at a time when excitement had evaporated and when their power for evil had thus been considerably restricted. Inadequate though the sentences may seem to have been when compared with the charges laid, they nevertheless had a salutary effect on the situation and proved the value of section 117 of the Indian Penal Code as a weapon for use against Communist speeches in times of stress.

Security for Maintenance of the Peace. It was some days, however, before the six Communist accused referred to were first brought to book, and when they were at length arrested and brought before the Court they were forthwith released on bail. They made full use of the period of grace thus allowed them in an endeavour to turn the agitation which they had stirred up into channels which would lead to a general industrial strike. In this they were ably assisted by two other Indian Communists who had hastened from Bombay to Calcutta at the first sign of trouble. Thus, on the evening of the 2nd April the Union leaders issued a revolutionary leaflet inciting the workers to organise a general strike under the leadership of the students in retaliation for the events of the previous day. At the same time Abdul Halim circulated another leaflet printed in English and entitled "To Workers and Citizens of Calcutta" which also urged a sympathetic general strike. These leaflets and others of their kind were distributed at a well-attended public meeting where the speeches were punctuated with cries such as "Victory to the Red Army" and "Victory to Soviet Russia", and on the

following day another of the accused, freshly released on bail, addressed another meeting and advised the carters to continue to disobey the law while a third addressed his public remarks to the Indian ranks of the police force whom he advised to desert their posts.

Against activities of this nature by persons already within the clutches of the law an effective weapon was found in the shape of sections 107 and 117 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The former of these compels a person who is likely to disturb the public tranquillity to show cause why he should not execute a bond to keep the peace, while sub-section 3 of the latter section provides an immediate means of detaining such persons in custody (on their failing to execute a preliminary bond) while the more cumbrous processes involved in section 107 take their course. Faulty though such a course may be as a permanent remedy, it has its advantages as a measure of temporary relief in times of stress such as Calcutta was passing through in April 1930, and I venture the opinion that, had resort been had to it more frequently in the past, the Meerut Conspiracy Case would not have attained to the dimensions which it did.

Propaganda Material. It has been said elsewhere that the bulk of the present expenditure of the Eastern Secretariat of the Communist International on India is devoted to propaganda, a steady and expensive stream of which has increasingly flowed into India since Communism first took root there. In order to give some idea of the extent of that stream, I may say that during 1931 (the last year for which complete figures are available at the time when I write) the total number of Communist newspapers and periodicals held up in the mails was in the neighbourhood of 12,000 copies; this comprised forty-one different papers from no less than eight different countries in Europe, Asia, and America; and it is obvious from the results of the searches which preceded the Meerut Conspiracy Case and from numerous other finds of such literature that it is by no means all that was sent. Indeed, the subterfuges to which those who send it resort in order to defeat the censorship and the shortness of the time available for examination preclude the possibility of obtaining cent per cent results in this parti-

cular branch of work for which the police owe so much to the postal department. Communist dailies are frequently wrapped in one or two pages of the *London Times* or the *New York Herald Tribune* or other papers of similar standing; books are wrapped in the dust covers of popular novels or religious works; the addresses of firms or shops of good repute are used as a cover to which such literature may be sent, and instructions, such as those which an Indian distributor of a Communist weekly recently gave to the publishers are all too frequently carried out. . . . "Please send these twelve copies in three packets of four copies each in plain wrappers as usual so as not to attract attention". To stem this persistent stream there are several methods. That most commonly employed is section 19 of the Sea Customs Act which provides that the Governor-General in Council may prohibit the bringing into India of any particular class of goods. In exercise of these powers a comprehensive notification was framed in 1927 prohibiting the landing in India of any publication issued by or emanating from the Communist International or any organisation affiliated to or controlled by or connected with the Communist International. It was not long, however, before it appeared that even this notification left certain loopholes through which such literature could legitimately find its way into the country. In 1932, therefore, a fresh notification was issued which empowered Customs officials to seize an even greater variety of such matter. A copy of this new notification is printed as an Appendix. Should any literature escape the Customs net and be found within India, it may be seized by certain postal officials under section 25 of the Post Office Act if it is in the course of transmission by post, or under section 178 of the Sea Customs Act by the local representative of the Customs Department if it is discovered elsewhere.

Internal Propaganda. A large amount of Communist propaganda is published in India itself, however, some of it being original writings, but the bulk of it reprints or vernacular translations of matter published abroad. For this there is a permanent remedy commonly in use, the practical value of which is strictly limited.

Section 99-A of the Criminal Procedure Code provides for the proscription and forfeiture by a local Government of documents which infringe section 124-A or 153-A of the Indian Penal Code both of which have been previously discussed. There are, however, numerous legal rulings on record to the effect that a local Government cannot pass such orders unless it has the matter complained of before it. Against a daily or even a weekly newspaper published, possibly, in a town remote from the provincial headquarters by several days such a provision is useless; for the issue complained of will have been read and re-read many times before the local Government whose concern it is can even have heard of its existence. In such a case the only effective method is to obtain and keep a substantial hold on both the printer and publisher.

The 1932 Ordinances. Throughout 1932 there was in operation a useful provision which empowered a local Government to inflict a substantial fine on any printing-press which is used for the purpose of printing or publishing literature of the subversive types referred to above, and also to confiscate the matter in question. Side by side with it there was a provision which made illegal the sale, distribution or publication of literature of a similar nature. These provisions, at first included as sections 4 and 18 in the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act of 1931, whose life was originally of no more than a year, were made more potent by the Ordinances which the second civil disobedience movement made necessary. The effect of recent legislation passed by the Central Legislature, has been to uphold their greater virility and to prolong their operation for a further three years.

A Specific Case. There is one recorded case of the prosecution of a Communist under these sections, some details of which may serve a useful purpose as illustrating the uses to which they may be put. The conviction of Amir Haidar Khan in Madras in 1932 has already received brief mention in chapter 19. The charges laid against him proceeded from the clandestine publication of a series of actionable leaflets. The drafting and publication of these leaflets were exclusively the work of Amir Haidar and one assistant who was also arrested.

There was also evidence of their having been in possession of a number of these leaflets and of having distributed others. Amir Haidar was, therefore, charged under section 18 of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act of 1931 and when further legal advice had been taken a supplementary charge of sedition (section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code) was added. Judgment was pronounced in both cases on the 14th November 1932 and Amir Haidar Khan was sentenced to eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment for sedition and to six months' rigorous imprisonment on each of three counts under section 18 (two of these periods to run concurrently), the whole of the year's sentence in the latter case to take effect on expiry of the sentence under section 124-A Indian Penal Code.

Testimony to the Efficacy of the Ordinances. Although the case of Amir Haidar Khan can hardly be called typical and although these Ordinances were but seldom brought into operation against Communists as such, yet there are several pieces of independent testimony to the good which the Ordinances did in a general way to check the growth of this noxious weed. Thus a prominent member of M. N. Roy's Party recently wrote to his friends in Berlin that "the trade union movement is practically at a standstill owing to the abnormal conditions prevalent under the Ordinance régime". He had previously made it clear that the "trade union movement" of which he was writing consisted of a series of general strikes quite different from the "sporadic strikes of a purely defensive character" which took place in various places during 1932. So, too, Kiron Basak, whose history is given in Chapter 20, having surveyed the situation in Bengal immediately on his return from abroad, wrote to his brother, another member of the Indian Students' Group, then in England. "You will be glad to learn that our poor friend has got a baby. It is 4 months old now. The baby was not quite O.K. when it was born, but with proper care it is gradually gaining health. But the baby is so very sick that we are afraid it may be pretty difficult to make it survive the cold weather, specially P.B. I'll send you on a photograph of the baby".

The "baby" is a Communist paper called "*Sarbhabara*" which made its appearance in Bengal in the middle of 1931, and "P.B." (Press Bill) refers to the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act which had just been passed into law when Kiron Basak's letter was written.

Recent Enactments. The greater part of the 1932 Ordinances has now been passed into law, some by central and some by provincial legislation, and for the next three years at any rate, no insuperable difficulty should present itself to the authorities, particularly in the Bombay Presidency, Bengal, the Punjab, and the Frontier Province where the local Councils have provided adequate means to combat every form of dangerous subversive activity. Nor, indeed, are the authorities in the rest of India lacking in powers for use in an emergency such as the Indian Communist movement may, from time to time, present. For the very drastic amendments to the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 to which the Legislative Assembly has recently signified approval have made of this emasculated Act a real power in reserve against open manifestations of the Communist movement. Its value against individuals who overtly or secretly profess Communism yet belong to no open or ascertainable Communist party or association has yet to be proved. It will probably be found that resort must be had in such cases to other sections of the law.

An Effective Order in Bengal. In this manner then, it is possible successfully to bring to book the known authors and printers and publishers of inflammatory literature such as Indian Communists are wont to produce for mass consumption. To deal with the literature itself other measures are required. It has already been shown that the cumbrous procedure which the invocation of section 99-A of the Code of Criminal Procedure involved has rendered resort to it largely ineffective. As a means of overcoming these difficulties, the Bengal Government issued on the 23rd April 1928 an order under section 26 (1) of the Post Offices Act which empowered two senior police officers in Bengal to impound "any inland or foreign postal article which may be discovered, in the course of transmission by post, to contain literature directed to encourage international

revolution ". This order confers a boon on the over-taxed authorities whose duty it was to combat not only Communism but all subversive movements in a province in which they abound. That the order is still in force in its original form to-day is sufficient testimony alike to the capability of those who drafted it and to the successful manner in which it has been worked.

It is not to be inferred from what has just been written that recent legislation has not been efficacious. On the contrary, the promulgation of the Ordinances in January 1932 had an immediate and lasting effect on the tone of all classes of subversive writers except perhaps those who preferred to publish their work clandestinely or who were definitely prepared to accept the consequences of their misdeeds. Against such as these no earthly powers will avail; against the work of their hands the orders of the Bengal Government provide a useful weapon in the hands of the authorities.

Communist Funds. For some considerable time money which was sent through the post for the support of the Communist movement was intercepted in the course of transmission and returned, if it was in the form of a money order, to the country of origin in accordance with the International Postal Convention. Such action was taken under section 26 (1) of the Indian Post Office Act which provides for the confiscation of "postal articles" if such a course is in the interests of the public safety. In 1931, however, a legal ruling proclaimed the fact that a money order could not legitimately be described as a "postal article" within the meaning of this Act and there was a short period during which, anomalously enough, there was no remedy against the use of His Majesty's Indian post offices for the transmission of money intended to assist in the overthrow of His Majesty's sovereignty. Cheques, bankers' drafts, etc., which were sent through the post could, of course, still be withheld. The Ordinances which the 4th January 1932 brought forth, however, bridged this hiatus in the law by empowering District Magistrates to control the operations of all post or telegraph offices in which, of course, was included the transmission of postal money

orders. This provision has been reproduced in the new Acts which the Bombay, Bengal, Punjab and North-West Frontier Provincial Councils have recently passed, and the position in those four provinces for the next three years will thus be the same as it was prior to the adverse ruling referred to above. In the rest of India the previous anomalous position was restored when the Ordinances lapsed at the end of 1932.

Unlawful Association. Recent legislation in the central Assembly in Delhi has, however, provided the requisite powers for use in an emergency wherever, in British India, it may occur. There has been on the Indian Statute book since 1908 an Act of which but little use has been made till recent years. The butt of the Indian legislature in 1922, it then became a mere shadow of its former self. In the form in which it existed at the end of 1931 it enabled a Governor in Council to notify as an unlawful association any organisation which had as its object interference with the administration or maintenance of law and order, or which constituted a danger to the public peace. Any person who assisted the operations of such an organisation was liable on conviction to a sentence not exceeding six months' rigorous imprisonment, while those who went one step further and assisted in the management or promotion of such an organisation ran the risk of rigorous imprisonment for two years. The Ordinances promulgated at the beginning of 1932 made possible a close scrutiny of and a rigid control over the funds at the disposal of such unlawful associations, and the powers of local Governments were so extended as to include the ultimate confiscation of any funds which investigation proved were intended for subversive purposes. These powers have now been included in the recent central legislation and will provide for the next three years a strong bulwark against a large influx of Communist money into the six provinces which are bereft of the salutary measure mentioned in the previous paragraph, provided only that such moneys as come to notice are intended for some definite and ascertainable Communist organisation whose activities are such as to merit the somewhat drastic step of declaring it an unlawful association.

Indirect Methods of Attack. An indication has already been given in Chapter 21 of the wholesome effect which the remissions of land revenue granted by the Government of the Punjab in 1931 had on the agrarian situation which, at the time when they were made, showed dangerous signs of passing under the control of the Moscow-controlled *Kirti-Kisan Sabha*. Some mention must also be made of a measure, the Debt Conciliation Act, which has just left the legislative anvil in the Central Provinces. This Bill aims at effecting amicable settlement of agricultural debts through local arbitration rather than by expensive resort to the civil courts. Briefly, this new Act empowers the local Government to form a Conciliation Board to which debtors and creditors can apply for a decision on their disputes and the Board's finding will have the force of a civil court decree. As one newspaper has recently remarked, "it seems to us extremely doubtful whether, in view of the purely permissive nature of the new measure, the money-lenders will avail themselves of arbitration which might be less favourable to them than the decisions of a regular court of law". But the Act is clearly a step in the right direction and it may be prophesied that it will do something towards preventing the local peasantry from falling into the clutches of Communist agitators by removing, to some extent, one source of agrarian discontent which Moscow seeks to foster.

In Bengal and Bihar, too, very considerable efforts are being made, sponsored by the supporters of Government, to defeat the increasing efforts of Communism and to induce tenants to rely on constitutional political leaders to represent their interests. Eyes are, of course, on the forthcoming elections and the fear is that the politician's interest in the masses may not outlive that event, but the movement is sound if well directed. The danger lies in making the *ryot* think too much of himself and one cannot help repeating the Communist slogan, "first disturb the masses' placid contentment, then inculcate Communist doctrines".

Such efforts and others like those of Sir Daniel Hamilton in the south of Bengal, which are aimed at the uplift

of the rural population and the improvement of their finances, cannot fail to attract the peasantry and every step in such a direction is a step away from Communism and the bloodshed and misery which Communism implies.

Emissaries from Britain. Of the British Communists who have visited India from time to time Spratt, Bradley and Hutchinson have, of course, been prosecuted at Meerut while Clark and Bennett, the two Canadians mentioned in Chapter 19, decided to leave India of their own free will. The only other Communist of British extraction who has been dealt with under the Indian law is George Allison who, as Donald Campbell, arrived in Bombay in April 1926 and was deported therefrom some two years later after serving a term of imprisonment. His case raised some points of legal interest which it will, perhaps, be profitable to discuss. The charges in the Lower Court were framed under sections 466, 471 and 474 of the Indian Penal Code (the forgery of public documents, using forged documents as genuine and knowingly possessing forged documents, respectively), and section 6 read with section 3 of the Passport Act and the rules framed under it. It was with these charges before the jury that the whole of the prosecution evidence was heard and not until the prosecution case had closed did the Judge himself question whether the case came under section 466 of the Indian Penal Code on the strength of the definition of a public servant. Up to this time it had been assumed that a British passport was a document "made by a public servant"; but sections 21 and 14 of the Indian Penal Code, which define "public servant" and "servant of the Queen", make it clear that a document issued by an official in the United Kingdom does not come within the scope of section 466. This discovery had the effect of lowering the maximum punishment under section 471, I.P.C. from seven to two years' imprisonment, which is equivalent to the maximum punishment which can be awarded for a similar offence committed in the United Kingdom. Shortly before the expiry of his sentence, Allison was placed on a vessel at sea and deported under section 5 of the Indian Passports Act which authorises the removal of any person

who has entered British India in defiance of the Passport Regulations and confers upon any officer of Government "all reasonable powers" for this purpose.

The Passports Act. In this particular respect the Indian Passports Act is a satisfactory weapon in the hands of the authorities but as a means of preventing the entry of Communist emissaries it has several shortcomings. Not least of these is the fact that the rules framed under section 3 of the Act make no offence of entry into India by land without a passport except at three specified places. Rule 3 reads: "No person proceeding from any place outside India shall enter British India by sea or by air or by the Chaman, Khyber or Nushki land route unless he is in the possession of a passport". Although instances are rare of Moscow's emissaries having found their way to India otherwise than by the usual sea-routes, yet cases are not lacking of unknown and unheralded aliens being discovered in Burma whence they can readily make their way to Calcutta and so to India proper. Particularly was this the case when the French offensive began in Indo-China after the 1930 rebellion there. It is known, too, that many *Ghadr* emissaries have found their way to and from America by this route which is much favoured by Sikhs who have something to hide from the authorities. They travel from Calcutta to Burma or Singapore (where travellers from India stand in no lawful need of passports), onwards to Siam, and thence through Yunnan to Shanghai, where after the Party's smuggling rings on the Pacific Coast ensure safe transit to California. Throughout the greater part of this 13,000 mile journey no questions are asked, passport control does not exist or can be overcome by the payment of a few small coins of the realm, and the stream of surreptitious travellers passes backwards and forwards unhampered. The absence of any control whatsoever on India's north-eastern frontier cannot but occasion considerable misgivings to those who are charged with the task of keeping track of Moscow's designs against India. More particularly is this the case when the words of the Japanese official, quoted in Chapter 9, are recalled and when the record of events in Indo-China and Siam is read in the light of what has been written above.

Similar, though possibly less aggravated, is the position in north-western India, as the continual flow of *Ghadr* emissaries from Russia through Afghanistan to India and back has shown. Fortunately, a friendly King in Afghanistan has stemmed the stream in recent years, but to the layman it seems a trifle improvident to rely solely on the good offices of a none too stable foreign power for the protection of one's frontier from foreign penetration.

Another seeming flaw in the existing Passports Act is contained in the section which provides for the grant of visas of limited duration to those who profess a desire to pass through India *en route* for other countries, and yet fails to empower the Indian magistracy to inflict punishment on those who infringe the conditions on which such a visa was granted. Such cases are by no means rare and, although a charge of Communist activity has never yet been satisfactorily brought home to such a delinquent, several have fallen under strong suspicion and have been deported under the Foreigners Act. In any case, the dangers of the existence of such a loop-hole in the law are self-evident.

Foreign Agents. The Foreigners Act mentioned above provides an effective means of ridding India of those emissaries of Moscow who cannot lay claim to British nationality. Section 3 empowers a local Government to order any foreigner to remove himself from British India, by a particular route if necessary, while the next succeeding section enables a District Magistrate to apprehend the person in question until such time as a decision shall have been reached. Failure to comply with the order renders the foreigner liable to imprisonment for an unspecified period. The existence of this section of the law has proved an invaluable weapon against Communism and it will be recalled that a number of persons, including J. W. Johnstone, W. N. Kweit and H. G. Lynd, have been removed from India by virtue of it.

European Parallels. It will be seen, therefore, that with the recent passage of legislation through the Councils and the Assembly, India now has no lack of weapons with which to combat every form of subversive

movement which threatens her peace and prosperity, not least of which is Communism. That a few are faulty and others unwieldy is a matter for some regret; for weak links inevitably detract from the value of a chain. The coming storm is giving sufficient warning of its advance, however, to permit of the filling in of the gaps and the strengthening of the reserves of power before it finally breaks. It is unnecessary to relate at great length how Germany in 1931 was compelled to stem, by resort to extraordinary measures, a steadily increasing stream of political propaganda of a treasonable or seditious nature and to check a growing tendency amongst radical associations towards deliberately planned attacks on the public or their opponents; nor how the provisional Government of Spain in October of the same year faced similar conditions with comprehensive measures such as those which made illegal incitement to commit acts of violence against persons or property and lockouts and strikes; nor how the Lappo Movement in Finland completed a successful programme of anti-Communist legislation in 1930 with amendments to the Penal Law which made guilty of "high treason" all those who joined an organisation which worked for the overthrowing by violence of the social order of Finland and condemned them to eight years' penal servitude and forfeiture of citizen rights. These are stories which can be read elsewhere. So, too, can that of Mussolini who "refused to make justice a farce through legal technicalities" when dealing with the serious and dangerous Mafia movement in 1927. The life of the special tribunals set up at about that time and of the special procedure initiated for the speedy conduct of its trials has recently been extended till 1935 or 1936. It is a striking testimony to the thoroughness of the French law-givers just after the Revolution that the laws they passed have required so little adaptation to meet recent developments. What was sauce for the monarchist gander is proving to be sauce for the Communist goose as well.

Colonial Legislation. But it is probably in Britain's own Dominions—Canada and Australia—that the authorities are best equipped to tackle the thorny problem of Communist penetration. Part II-A was

added to the Commonwealth of Australia Crimes Acts. 1914-1932 in 1926 in order to protect the constitution and public and other services. A few additions were made to it in 1932 and it is now generally considered to be particularly effective and to constitute a model which might with advantage be followed in other parts of the Empire. Not only have certain classes of organisation been made unlawful and their members liable to a year's, and their advocates to two years' imprisonment but those who have any financial dealings with them may be sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Their literature cannot lawfully be published, distributed or sent through the post and "all goods and chattels" belonging to them are forfeit; while in any prosecution proof that the defendant has, at any time since the introduction of this new legislation, taken part in the affairs of such an unlawful association, "shall, in the absence of proof to the contrary, be evidence that at all times material to the case he was a member of the association". Serious industrial disturbances and the obstruction of the performance of services are comprehensively provided against and ample powers are placed in the hands of the Attorney-General to control the goings and comings of any objectionable person "not born in Australia". In short, provision is made against every form of Communist activity which has so far come to light and it is clear that the Australian House of Representatives is in no doubt as to the danger which this insidious movement presents to the peace and well-being of the Commonwealth.

The equivalent provisions of the Canadian Criminal Code are hardly less efficacious though the punishments laid down are much more severe. Thus, any person in anywise associated with an unlawful association shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twenty years; persons who deal in its literature are similarly liable and those who knowingly permit such an association to hold its meetings in their premises may be punished with five years' imprisonment and a five thousand dollar fine. The burden of proof of disassociation is placed, as it is in Australia, on the defendant, and in Canada, too, all literature is forfeit to His Majesty and

“every person in the employment of His Majesty in respect of His Government of Canada, either in the Post Office Department or in any other Department” is charged with the definite duty of seizing such literature wherever it may be found in transit and of forwarding it to the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Oriental Parallels. Apart from China where, as has already been shown, the mere profession of Communism is punishable with death, there are two other countries of the East whose efforts to counter this subversive movement are of some interest. In Japan, a person guilty of organising or directing a society for the purpose of “changing the form of Government” is punishable with death or life imprisonment or imprisonment of not less than five years, while all members of such a society are to be sentenced to undergo imprisonment for not less than two years. Those who set up or join an organisation which aims at the removal of the system of private property are punishable with imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years, while the law regarding the financing of either type of organisation is even more comprehensive and stringent than that in Australia. A particularly interesting feature of the Japanese law in this regard—a feature which crops up in the laws of France as well—is the extent to which clemency may be shown to those who repent before the day of their reckoning. The final section of the Japanese Maintenance of Peace and Order Act, for instance, reads as follows:—“A person guilty of any of the aforementioned crimes may be exempted from punishment or have the term thereof reduced if he voluntarily reports or surrenders in person.” From the somewhat meagre evidence available, however, it seems extremely doubtful whether this provision is having the salutary effect which it was obviously intended to have. For numerous arrests and widespread searches occasion the belief that Communism in Japan is hardly the sinking ship from which rats are likely to run. As a Japanese paper recently remarked on the conclusion of one of the larger Communist conspiracy cases in Tokyo, “The people of this country are coming to realise more and more that Com-

munism attracts the brightest brains among the seriously-minded students. Hence its very danger. If the interest in Communist doctrines were confined to the lower strata of society it might be checked, but in the present movement is to be seen the growth of the same sort of intellectual leadership as has led to Communist upheavals in other lands ”.

Siam, the other independent Kingdom in the Far East, has also recently taken steps to put its house in order. A Penal Code Amendment Act passed in 1928 also discriminates between “ the chief, manager, or any official ” and the ordinary membership of an organisation, secret or otherwise, whose objects are to teach or advocate any political or economic doctrine or system intended or calculated, *inter alia*, to bring into hatred or contempt the Government or the administration of the State or to stir up class hatred. The former are liable to ten years’ and the latter to five years’ imprisonment with a substantial fine in each case. Adequate provision is also made against the Communist weapon of the general strike or dislocation of business and whoever takes part in such cessations of work “ as part of a plan to overthrow the Government or to change the political or economic institution by force or violence ” renders himself liable to the death penalty or to a mandatory sentence of imprisonment for life. The difficulties so frequently experienced in India of proving a particular malefactor’s membership or connection with an unlawful association is overcome (as it is to a large extent by the Canadian and Australian law) in very simple fashion in Siam: “ Any person attending any meeting of such association shall be presumed to be a member of the association.”

Foreign Colonial Possessions. French Indo-China. Comment has already been made on the fact that the law of France needed very little adaptation to meet present requirements and it may now be stated that this applies equally to French colonial law, most, if not all, of which is framed and passed in Paris itself. The very stringent laws which were framed shortly after the French Revolution served for many years as an adequate safeguard against subversive movements in Indo-

China. For although the punishments prescribed seem in many cases absurdly small by contrast with those provided in the laws of the protected independent kingdoms, yet so all-embracing were the laws of France that no single manifestation of insubordination could escape their clutches. Thus, even the public utterance of a seditious cry or the public singing of a seditious song is punishable with imprisonment of from six days to a year and a fine of from seven to five hundred *piastres*; foreigners may be deported at short notice, whether domiciled in Indo-China or not, and sentenced to imprisonment ranging from one to six months if they return. Presses and all their products have been kept under rigid control in Cochin China ever since 1881 by a comprehensive law which brings within its purview every form of propaganda material conceived at that time, while in 1927 the bulk of the provisions of this legal weapon were brought into force in other parts of Indo-China in an up-to-date form which took account of such comparatively modern inventions as the gramophone, the cinematograph and sky signs. In the same year (1927) a few loopholes which experience had disclosed in the Penal Code were also made good by the addition of a section which provided for the passing of a sentence of from one to five years imprisonment on any one who took part in "other manœuvres or acts (besides attempts and conspiracies) of such a nature as to compromise the public security or to occasion serious political trouble or to excite feelings of hatred against the French Government." The year 1927 also brought more stringent provisions regarding the smuggling of arms into Indo-China which laid down heavy penalties for all who engaged in this form of traffic. Thus did the French providently secure their ship of state against the coming storm and thus were they able to weather it when it broke less than three years later.

The Dutch East Indies. So, too, in Java and Sumatra. The year 1930, which Chapter 14 has shown was one of grave anxiety for the Dutch, saw a tightening up of the existing law in Holland's eastern colonial possessions. Prior to 1930 attempted offences against the authority or security of the State were punishable only

when some overt act had been done in pursuance of the conspiracy, and action was, therefore, impossible against those who abandoned their criminal intentions when it became obvious that Government interference would thwart their objects. It was then found necessary, however, so to legislate that any preliminary action which indicated the intention to commit a criminal offence against the safety of the State should become in itself a punishable offence. The discovery of external forces at work against the State at about the same time made necessary another addition to the then laws and the Dutch did not hesitate to make it. Whoever enters into relations with a person resident in, or a body established outside the Dutch East Indies, with the object of persuading such person or body to afford assistance towards preparing, promoting, or causing revolution, or assists such person or body in any way has, since this addition was made to the Statute Book, been liable to imprisonment which shall not exceed six years.

But in several respects the Dutch were less far-sighted than their French neighbours in the East. For it was not till trouble had burst upon them that they set their hands to controlling those all-important factors, the platform and the press. An amendment passed in 1926 provided that whoever intentionally, by word spoken or written, or by visible representations, be it indirectly, conditionally or concealed, advocated or excited to disturbance of public order or to revolution or to aggression against established authority in the Dutch East Indies should be punished with imprisonment of not more than three years duration or a fine of not more than 300 guilders. Whoever distributed or exhibited such written word or visible representation intending thereby to give publicity to the contents or to increase their publicity should be punished more heavily with imprisonment extending up to five years, while any form of incitement to a criminal offence or to violence against the public authority or to any other disobedience was similarly made punishable with comparatively heavy imprisonment at the same time.

CHAPTER 24.

INDIA'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES.

Since Sir David Petrie, five and a half years ago, issued his book, *Communism in India*, the attention of the world has been directed towards the efforts of Russia to make a success of her Five-Year Plan. In this interval the horrors of the great revolution have faded into the background and many young men have come to maturity to whom those horrors seem merely to be matters of ancient history. It follows somewhat naturally that there are now to be found increasing numbers of people wondering, during the existing and long persisting worldwide economic depression, whether Russia alone is not on the right tack. Some there may be who will be prepared to say that what has been written in the preceding chapters about Communism will, in a few years' time, be proved to be as nonsensical as what die-hards of all time have written or said about political evolutions which have steadily grown to maturity and success throughout history. If such an opinion is expressed by anyone who has read the whole book, my apologies will be due for not having emphasised more strongly what Lenin himself consistently preached: "The substitution of a proletarian for the capitalist state is impossible without a violent revolution". I shall, moreover, be guilty of failing to make absolutely clear the fact that the world's champion against a worldwide violent revolution is, in the opinion of the most able and far-seeing Russian Communists, the British Empire. In addition, I shall have neglected to insist on the contention that the British Empire, in the opinion of the same experts, can most successfully be attacked through India. There are many outside Russia who share this view and it may be of interest to those who read this book if I record the purport of a conversation I had with a German in England shortly before I assumed charge of the Intelligence Bureau. This gentleman had many years' experience of the East and had held important diplomatic posts; he had lived

for some years in India and had had free access to the highest circles here; after the Great War he held office in the German Government. Speaking of the duties I was shortly to perform he begged me to concentrate on the problem of fighting the spread of Communism in India and explained that on success or failure in that fight depended the future of Germany and the rest of Europe. He contended, with extreme earnestness, that if the Bolshevik plans regarding India were to succeed, the sole substantial buttress against universal bloodshed and chaos in Europe, and therefore the entire world, namely, the British Empire, would collapse; Germany's own difficult fight to prevent a Communist revolution was only being maintained because of Britain's existence as world's champion against chaos. If this distinguished gentleman's opinion is correct there is every reason, now and for many years to come, to follow the admonition given in the last sentence of Sir David Petrie's book: "The spread of Communism in India is not one of those problems which may be looked at from a particular 'angle of vision'; it must be looked straight in the face, and it must be fought with the most unrelenting opposition".

The Fight against Communism not solely waged by the Law and Police.—The description in this book of the efforts made around and in India in recent years to further the aims of the Communist International shows that in this country those efforts have led to no solid success. I trust that the narrative has made clear some of the reasons why this is so. It certainly shows that the Government of India and the various local Governments have not underestimated the possible dangers and have been at pains to use their legal powers towards reducing such dangers. It has, probably, not shown so clearly that the Communist menace has been kept at a distance not only by police and court action. In England the great weapon against Communism is the common-sense and political understanding of the bulk of the population; a Communist orator in Hyde Park, for instance, talks to an audience composed of people who know quite as much about social and economic problems as he does; his speeches receive shrewd criticism, silent or vocal,

according to the mood or wit of his listeners, and seldom do any harm. India, on the other hand, is trying to find her legs in the political world and political sense has not yet spread far downwards. Her people require guidance and help from the comparatively few who have the education and the opportunities sufficient for the appreciation of new creeds and shibboleths. Communist fare is often served up in an attractive and insidious manner and can be made by skilled agents to appear to be the very dish for low-paid and poorly fed labourers and artisans. It can, at times when prices are bad and it is difficult to find money for rent or revenue, appear attractive to the holders of small farms. There have been times in recent years when the danger of such appreciation became increasingly real. It was then that the strength of the personal touch in the relations of district officers with the people was tested, and one of the reasons for the failure of Communism has been the success of the officers in that test. It has been mentioned before how, for instance, the wind was taken from the sails of the Communists by administrative action in the Punjab; how heavy remissions of revenue gave heart to farmers and re-established their confidence in their Government. But the tale has not been, and probably never will be, told how revenue and other officials in districts and subdivisions took their share in upholding the faith of the cultivator in those responsible for their welfare. Similarly also in other branches of the administration. There are, for instance, some colleges and schools in India which have succeeded in keeping out the influence of even the ordinary agitator during both years of civil disobedience, and there are more where Communism has not yet had a hearing. Those responsible for such institutions deserve a tribute in a review of this kind and there would be more of them if all schoolmasters in India had the education and knowledge of the world which their profession would seem to demand. In many parts of India, however, it is the good sense of the small farmer which is, perhaps, the strongest barrier against Communism; he has a natural pride in his small possessions and in the work of his hands and he views with suspicion anyone who preaches a creed likely to spell ruin to either. Where

there has been a sympathetic understanding of his wants and difficulties on the part of those above him, Communist seeds have found barren ground. A greater danger lies in those parts of the country where bigger estates are common; there the responsibility of the landholder is immense; on his actions and character depends to a very great extent the possible reaction of the tenant to a gospel which promises a distribution of property to "have-nots". Similarly in industrial areas the progress of Communist designs must depend largely on the actions and conduct of the captains of industry; the Communist has a comparatively easy task in persuading the workmen of an unsympathetic, grasping master that the change he advocates can only bring about something better than he has hitherto enjoyed. Where, on railways, in factories, workshops, and mines, the workmen have realised that the will to look after labour's interests exists, Communism has made little headway.

The Future. The preceding chapters have sketched, in brief detail only, when all the mass of information received on the subject is considered, the plans, scanty successes, and more numerous failures of Communists in India. It may be of interest and value to quote the appreciation of an Indian Communist on the achievements of the Party. Writing in May 1932 to an Indian friend in England, he said:—"I know that Communism, or proletarian revolution, may not be coming in India in my life-time. I know that our peasantry is as yet untouched and without its solid backing nothing can be done in a colonial country like India. I know that our working class is quite far from what it should be. I also know that our young men are altogether devoid of experience and very raw in ideology and tactics. I also know that our working-class movement will have to pass through any number of makeshift forms and combinations; it is almost impossible to forecast what final form the struggle shall take but that is no reason why the goal should be obscured, why the path should be befogged." These are also the sentiments of the ardent, militarist Communists of Moscow and nothing is more certain than that their goal is still kept in sight and their objective, the disruption of the British Empire through India, still

clear. They have been checked again and again but persist with a doggedness worthy of a better cause, and already, in spite of the serious check given to them in the convictions and sentences in the Meerut Conspiracy Case, they have commenced once again to set their Indian machinery in motion.

The present position, as I see it, is, very briefly, as follows. The Communist International has, through its German and British agencies, undertaken the training of young Indians (and indeed young men of most Asiatic countries), of good stock and education, in Bolshevik principles and methods; some have arrived and are at work; since their arrival a very considerable number of Bengal terrorists have swung away from terrorism with its individual acts of murder and frightfulness to a campaign to bring about mass risings in the not far distant future; the number of such apostles will increase; the immediate benefit has been a lull in assassinations; one danger is that, in a province containing a large number of impressionable and out-of-work young men, the movement will flourish; perhaps a graver danger is that it will spread to other provinces already infected with the terrorist microbe and grow till it requires suppressing by force of arms. As regards industrial areas it must be remembered that M. N. Roy, though in prison, is still in India and that he has not found it impossible to do propaganda work from within the prison walls; since the preceding chapters of this book were written it has become almost a certainty that at least three German Communist agents are in India on his behalf working to advance the cause for which he has been sentenced; his movement has been severely checked but will be revived. At the time of writing there is a delicate situation on the north-west frontier and a possibility that a friendly King of Afghanistan will have some difficulty in maintaining his seat on the throne; the friends of ex-King Amanullah are, some willingly, some unconsciously, plotting on behalf of the Communist International, as the return of the King who had the temerity to declare war on the British Empire is one of its cherished hopes. Further west, but still on India's frontier, Communist influence is, in Persia, going

from strength to strength, and there is every reason to expect grave complications, at any rate on the expiry of the reign of the present monarch.

It will, I hope, be clear from what has been written in the narrative of this book that there is no need, when peering into the future, for pessimism, far less defeatism. The lesson, on the contrary, is surely that the ghastly danger of a Communist-inspired violent and bloody revolution on the Russian or Chinese lines can best be met by the cool study of efforts hitherto made by Communists to undermine the political and social Indian structure, of the methods whereby these efforts have been checked, of the means which the Communist International is most likely to employ in the future, and how the strength of the Indian people, Government, Law and Police can best be mobilised to defeat its nefarious plans. Such mobilisation can only be effected if the objective, means and methods of the enemy are understood and if none of these is underestimated or ignored. The object of this book is to help those in responsible posts to understand the nature of the enemy, his objective and his methods. Before the next volume on Communism in India is written great constitutional changes will have occurred and there is no sense in blinking the fact that the Communist International considers that the hopes of Communist success in India will be doubled by the changes. The successors of the present administrators in the country will, perhaps, read these chapters and will appreciate the fact that every word has been written for them, or for their predecessors in office, to read. I can only hope that by reading these pages they will be able to gather some glimmering of the reality of the dangers ahead, some idea of what would happen to the civilisation of the whole world were India found to be, as is hoped by the Communist International, an insecure key-stone of the arch of the British Empire, and some benefit from the survey made of the weapons with which the danger has been fought and of the manner in which they have been used. The book is also intended for those officers of the Crown who, in or out of India, have to deal with Communism and its dangers in the midst of other multiple duties; I can only express to them the hope that this survey will help them to acquire a true

perspective of the movement, and that demands made of them in its connection from time to time will appear more reasonable and justifiable than might have appeared to them without it.

APPENDIX I.

(Referred to on page 13.)

SUMMARY OF THE COMINTERN FIVE-YEAR PLAN.

Concurrently with the introduction of the Economic Plan, a Five-Year Plan for the activities of the Comintern was also launched. The main provisions of this plan were:—

- (a) To co-ordinate the international movement in accordance with the growth of socialist construction in the U. S. S. R. and arrange for periodical action in support as required.
- (b) During 1929, special attention was to be devoted to three objectives: the peasants, the trades unions, and work among the military.
- (c) During 1930, work was to be increased in Germany, the Balkans, Ireland, India, Australia and the British Colonies.
- (d) During 1931, work was to be mainly directed in France, the Latin Countries, and North and South America.
- (e) In 1932, it was expected that revolutionary action would be required in Central Europe, North and South Africa and in the Near and Far East. Imperialist intervention was expected during this year.
- (f) In 1933, the Communist Parties were to be prepared for action in any part of the world.
- (g) Throughout, every effort was to be made to destroy the understanding which had been reached between the victorious and defeated States of the Great War; to intensify unemployment and industrial unrest in Great Britain and Germany; and to carry out subversive propaganda in armies and fleets and in industrial areas.

APPENDIX II.

(Referred to on page 120.)

DRAFT PLATFORM OF ACTION OF THE C.P. OF INDIA.

PART I.

Main Tasks of the Indian Revolution.

The Indian people is groaning under the yoke and the exploitation of British imperialism. Relying upon their political and economic supremacy, and squeezing billions of rupees year by year out of the miserable national income of India, the blood-thirsty imperialists have brought the toiling masses of the people to a state of famine, hopeless poverty, intolerable slavery and mass extinction as a people.

With all the power of the State in its hands, controlling the main branches of industry, railways, sea and river transport, banks and the credit system, the greater part of the land, forests and the irrigation system, British imperialism has retarded and still obstructs the economic development of our country in every way, supporting and relying upon all that is backward and reactionary in town and country.

The supremacy of British imperialism is the basis of the backwardness, poverty and endless suffering of our people. Only by the merciless and violent destruction of the political and economic supremacy of the British imperialists will the working masses of India succeed in rising to their feet, achieving their independence and creating the conditions requisite for their further development, and for the reconstruction of society in the interests of the workers and peasants, and with the purpose of developing further towards Socialism.

In the enslavement of the Indian people British imperialism relies upon the native princes, the landlords, the moneylenders and the merchants, utilising the assistance of the national bourgeoisie. The system of landownership by the landlords, native princes and moneylenders, and the relics of serfdom in the land system of India (and consequently in all India's social and political institutions) represent the main bulwark of British supremacy.

In order to destroy the slavery of the Indian people and emancipate the working class and the peasants from the poverty which is crushing them down, it is essential to win the independence of the country and to raise the banner of agrarian revolu-

tion, which would smash the system of landlordism surviving from the middle ages and would cleanse the whole of the land from all this mediæval rubbish. An agrarian revolution against British capitalism and landlordism must be the basis for the revolutionary emancipation of India.

Linked up as it is with the system of landlordism and usury, and terrified at the thought of a revolutionary insurrection by the toiling masses, the capitalist class has long ago betrayed the struggle for the independence of the country and the radical solution of the agrarian problem. Its present "opposition" represents merely manoeuvres with British imperialism, calculated to swindle the mass of the toilers and at the same time to secure the best possible terms of compromise with the British robbers. The assistance granted to British imperialism by the capitalist class and its political organisation, the National Congress, takes the shape at the present time of a consistent policy of compromise with British imperialism at the expense of the people, it takes the form of the disorganisation of the revolutionary struggle of the native States, the system of landlordism and the reinforced exploitation, jointly with the imperialists, of the mass of the people, of the working class in particular. **The greatest threat to the victory of the Indian revolution is the fact that great masses of our people still harbour illusions about the National Congress, and have not realised that it represents a class organisation of the capitalists working against the fundamental interests of the toiling masses of our country.**

The policy of Gandhi-ism, on which the programme of the Congress is founded, uses the cloak of vague phrases about love, meekness, modest and hardworking existence, lightening the burden on the peasantry, the national unity, the special historic mission of Hinduism, etc. But under this cloak it preaches and defends the interests of the Indian capitalists, the inevitability and wisdom of the division of society into rich and poor, eternal social inequality and exploitation. That is, it preaches the interests of the capitalist development of India, **on the bones and the sweat of the working masses of the people**, in alliance with world imperialism. The National Congress betrayed and disorganised the struggle of the toilers in 1919-21. The National Congress supported the manufacturers against the workers during the textile strikes and in fact assisted in the passing of anti-labour legislation. The National Congress refused to support the fight of the railwaymen against British imperialism, suggesting that they should ask Lord Irwin and MacDonald to arbitrate. The National Congress opposed the peasantry in their struggle against the moneylenders, the big landlords and the native princes.

Jointly with the Liberals, the landlords and the manufacturers, the National Congress has **produced the anti-popular Nehru Constitution**, in which it declared the necessity of preserving the landlords, the rajahs and the moneylenders, remaining as a junior

partner in the British Empire and leaving supreme authority in the hands of the British Viceroy and the Governor General.

The National Congress issued the Delhi Manifesto supporting Gandhi's eleven points, which represented the moderate programme of the Chambers of Commerce and similar associations. It carried on negotiations with the Liberals in prison, trying behind the scenes to come to an understanding with the British Government, and so forth. **The National Congress, and particularly its "Left" Wing, have done and are doing all in their power to restrain the struggle of the masses within the framework of the British imperialist Constitution and legislation.**

In this connection—world history and the lessons of the class struggle in India prove that only the leadership of the working class can ensure the fulfilment of the historic task of emancipating the Indian people, abolishing national slavery, sweeping aside all the fetters which check national development, confiscating the land and effecting far-reaching democratic reconstruction of a revolutionary character. The working class of India, organised by the industrial process itself and by the class struggle, will, under the leadership of its Communist vanguard, perform its historic task of organising the scattered masses of peasantry and town poor for struggle against British domination and landlordism.

But in order to organise the mass of the workers, in order to rally the proletariat as a distinct class force, conscious of this distinct class interest and fighting for the leadership of the national movement for emancipation; in order to bring about the revolutionary alliance of the working class and the peasantry; in order to liberate the working class, the peasantry and the town poor from the hands of national reformism, and direct their revolutionary struggle towards an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution—for all these purposes the working class requires its own proletarian Communist Party.

The Communist Party of India is the party of the working class, the final aim of which is the achievement of Socialism and ultimately of complete Communism. The programme of the Communist Party of India is totally **different in principle** from the programmes and ideas of the other parties and groups, which are parties of the capitalist class and petty bourgeoisie, not excepting the national revolutionary parties. While the latter are striving for the development of capitalism in India, the Communist Party is consistently and firmly fighting for a Socialist path of development. While the national revolutionary groups are fighting for bourgeois rule and a bourgeois form of government the C.P. of India is fighting for the democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry, a Workers and Peasants' Soviet Government in India.

The only form of government which can safeguard the interests of the workers, peasants and toilers generally is the Soviets. The

Soviets, set up in the course of the revolutionary revolt of the working masses, as insurrectionary bodies for the overthrow of British supremacy, will be the sole genuine seats of authority, elected directly in the factories, works, villages, etc., ensuring confiscation of the land and the satisfaction of the vital needs of the mass of the people. The Soviet Government alone will be capable of ensuring to national minorities their right to self-determination, including that of complete separation, and at the same time achieving the maximum unity in the ranks of the toilers of various nationalities engaged in common revolutionary struggle against the enemies of the Indian revolution. The Soviet Government alone will be able to effect an alliance with the world proletariat for the purpose of defending the liberty and the achievements of the Indian revolution against the attacks of world imperialism and the Indian exploiters. Only such a government will be able to make an alliance with all other Soviet States against international imperialism and for the final victory of the world revolution.

Firmly and courageously, and notwithstanding any sacrifices, the Communist Party will defeat the disorganising and treacherous work of the national reformists. It will organise the masses of workers and peasants and lead them to victory over imperialism, and take the lead in the further march towards Socialism.

Adopting these as its guiding principles, the C.P. of India advances the following main objects for the present stage of the Indian revolution:—

- (1) **The complete independence of India by the violent overthrow of British rule. The cancellation of all debts. The confiscation and nationalisation of all British factories, banks, railways, sea and river transport and plantations.**
- (2) **Establishment of a Soviet Government. The realisation of the right of national minorities to self-determination including Separation. Abolition of the native states. The creation of an Indian Federal Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic.**
- (3) **The confiscation without compensation of all the lands, forests and other property of the landlords, ruling princes, churches, the British Government, officials and moneylenders, and handing over for use to the toiling peasantry. Cancellation of slave agreements and all the indebtedness of the peasantry to moneylenders and banks.**
- (4) **The 8-hour working day and the radical improvement of conditions of labour. Increase in wages and State maintenance for the unemployed.**

The Communist Party of India will fight for these main demands, which express the interests of the mass of the people,

and the achievement of which will create the conditions for and render possible further development in the direction of the building of a Socialist State of Society in India. At the same time, with the object of developing the mass revolutionary struggle and revolutionary education of the mass of the toilers, the C.P. of India puts forward partial demands, the struggle for which will facilitate the mobilisation of the mass of the people in revolutionary insurrection for its emancipation.

PART II.

The Fight for Partial Demands of the Revolutionary Movement.

The C.P. of India considers that **the sole and historically tested means of winning independence, carrying out the agrarian revolution and achieving democratic reconstruction, is the path of the revolutionary struggle of the widest possible mass of the people, developing into a general national armed insurrection against the British exploiters and all their allies in our country.**

The propaganda of non-violence of Gandhi, Nehru and the other leaders of the National Congress is intended to prevent a general national armed insurrection of the toiling masses against British rule. By his own confession in his autobiography, Gandhi took part in the armed suppression of the rising of the Zulu peasants in Africa and assisted the British robbers in their fight against the German capitalists for the right to exploit colonial peoples. Gandhi recruited Indian peasants into the British army, and sent to their deaths hundreds of thousands of Indian workers and peasants in the interests of the British robbers. And to-day Gandhi tells the peasants and workers of India that they have no right to and must not revolt against their exploiters. He tells them this at the very time when the British robbers are making open war on the Indian people in the North-West Province and throughout the country.

The toiling masses will understand this double game of the National Congress. The workers and peasants of India will not give up their right to smash the whole feudal, and imperialist system of exploitation, and **their right to bring about the violent overthrow of British rule.**

This emancipation of India cannot be achieved by a terrorist movement. The supporters of the terrorist movement of our country do not see and do not believe in the struggle of the broad masses of the people, and do not understand the connection between the agrarian revolution, the struggle of the working class and the overthrow of British domination. They try by brave and single-handed terrorist acts to achieve victory over British imperialism.

While recognising the devotion and self-sacrifice of the terrorists in the cause of the national emancipation of India, the Communist Party declares that the road to victory is not the

method of individual terror but the struggle and the revolutionary armed insurrection of the widest possible masses of the working class, the peasantry, the poor of the towns and the Indian soldiers, around the banner and under the leadership of the Communist Party of India.

The most harmful and dangerous obstacle to the victory of the Indian revolution is the agitation carried on by the "Left" elements of the National Congress, led by Jawahar Lal Nehru, Bose, Ginwalla and others. Under the cloak of revolutionary phraseology, they carry on the bourgeois policy of confusing and disorganising the revolutionary struggle of the masses, and help the Congress to come to an understanding with British imperialism. Particularly blackguardly and harmful is the part played by the national reformists in the labour movement, in which they try in every possible way to substitute the methods of class collaboration for the method of class struggle, doing their best to bring the workers under the influence of the ideas and the organisations of the Indian and British exploiters. The treacherous part played by the National Congress as regards the peasantry has once again shown itself in the appeal of the "Left" Congress leaders to the British Governor General of Bengal to send troops to crush the peasants revolts at Kishoreganj. In these circumstances some of the "Left" national reformists (supporters of Roy and others), who realise that the masses are becoming disillusioned in the Congress have cleverly put forward the advice to "win" the National Congress from within. Nominally their object is to revolutionise the Congress, in reality it is to restore the prestige of the Congress by replacing the old treacherous leaders by new leaders who are no better than the old.

The exposure of the "Left" Congress leaders, who may again undertake to set up a new party or organisation like the former League of Independence, in order once again to bamboozle the mass of the workers, is the primary task of our Party. **Ruthless war on the "Left" national reformists is an essential condition if we are to isolate the latter from the workers and mass of the peasantry, and mobilise the latter under the banner of the Communist Party and the anti-imperialist agrarian revolution in India.**

The Communist Party of India calls upon all the toilers to form a united front against the imperialists, the landlords, the moneylenders and the capitalists. The C.P. of India calls upon the Moslem and Indian workers and peasants not to be tricked by the cunning provocative methods of the British Government and the reactionary native exploiters, who set the toilers of different nationalities and religious beliefs against one another, and provoke conflicts between them. The C.P. of India calls upon all the toilers, including the untouchables (pariahs) not to permit such disorganisation and splitting of the united revolutionary front of the oppressed, who suffer equally at the hands of their own and British exploiters.

In its struggle to win leadership of the masses, the C.P. of India calls upon its supporters to make resolute use of any legal and semi-legal opportunity for public action and mobilisation of the masses around working class slogans. On every occasion they must expose the treacherous part played by the National Congress. Against the bourgeois front of compromise established by the national reformists, they must create the united front of the toilers from below, on the basis of definite proletarian revolutionary demands and activities.

As one of the practical means of explaining to the toiling masses the exploiting and treacherous policy of the Congress leaders, the C.P. of India recommends to its supporters to make use of their activity in the trade unions, municipal councils (Calcutta, Bombay, etc.) and similar institutions.

The C.P. of India calls upon its supporters and organisations to develop mass revolutionary activities and struggle of the working class for their political and economic demands, mass refusal by the peasants to pay taxes, levies, rent, debts, particularly in districts where there are large landed estates—thereby mobilising and preparing the mass of the toilers for revolutionary struggle against imperialism. **The C.P. of India calls upon all class-conscious workers and revolutionaries to assist in transforming individual strikes of the workers into a general political strike, as a resolute step in organising the revolutionary struggle of the mass of the people for independence, land and a Workers' and Peasants' Government under the guidance of the working class.**

A. General Demands.

In order to develop mass revolutionary struggle and the political training of the people, the C.P. of India puts forward and fights for the following demands:—

- (1) Expulsion of the British troops, abolition of the police and general armament of the toilers.
- (2) Immediate liberation of all political prisoners, including those who have committed acts of individual and mass violence.
- (3) Unlimited freedom of speech, conscience, press, meeting, strikes and association for the toilers, and abolition of all anti-popular and anti-labour laws (Trades Dispute Act, the prohibition of picketing, the regulations for the deportation of revolutionary workers, press act, etc.).
- (4) The abolition of rank, caste, national and communal privileges, and the full equality of all citizens irrespective of sex, religion and race.
- (5) Complete separation of religion from the State, and the expulsion of the missionaries as direct agents of the imperialists, with confiscation of their property.

- (6) Complete separation of religion from the State, and at any time on the demand of the majority of the electors.

B. Special Workers' Demands.

In order to organise the widest masses of the working class, defend the day-to-day interests of the workers and maintain the general revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses in our country, the C.P. of India calls upon all class-conscious workers to concentrate every effort on the creation of a revolutionary trade union movement. The C.P. of India deems it essential to organise mass trade unions based on factory committees, with the leadership elected directly by the workers and consisting of advanced revolutionary workers. The trade unions must become regularly functioning mass organisations, working in the spirit of the class struggle, and all efforts must be made to expel and isolate reformists of all shades, from the open agents of British capitalism such as Joshi, Chamanlal, Giri, etc., to the sham "Left" national reformists such as Bose, Ruikar, Ginwalla and other agents of the Indian bourgeoisie, who constitute a reactionary bloc for joint struggle against the revolutionary wing of the trade union movement. At the same time the C.P. of India works for the transformation of the All-India Trade Union Congress into a fighting All-India centre of the labour movement on a class basis.

I. The C.P. of India calls upon all its supporters and all class-conscious workers to help in organising factory committees in all factories, railways, docks, etc., throughout the country. In cases where owing to the victimisation of the employers or British authorities the factory committees have to work semi-legally, the C.P. advocates putting forward the demand for recognition of the factory committees as one of the principal demands in strike movements. The C.P. of India calls for the country-wide organisation of workers' defence detachments, both to defend workers' strikes and demonstrations and to take part in the general revolutionary struggle.

II. The C.P. of India calls upon all class-conscious workers to help the Party to organise the movement and the struggle of the unemployed for regular relief at the expense of the State and the employers. It calls for the country-wide organisation of unemployed councils, demonstrations and joint struggle with the workers in industry for the partial demands of the unemployed—monthly unemployment benefit at the minimum cost of living, refusal to pay rent, free supply of fuel and foodstuffs by the municipal authorities, etc.

III. Taking note of the semi-slave conditions of plantation and agricultural workers, the C.P. of India calls upon class-conscious workers to take part and assist in the organisation of trade unions, of plantation and agricultural workers. The fight for complete abolition of all systems of serfdom, compulsory and contract labour, deprivation of rights and unprecedented exploitation of the

agricultural proletariat is one of our main aims, linked up closely with the aim of mobilising the broad masses of peasantry to fight imperialist and feudal exploitation, under the leadership of the working class.

IV. With the object of protecting the working class from physical and moral degeneration, and also in order to raise its capacity to fight for emancipation, the C.P. of India fights for:

- (1) Limitation of the working day to 8 hours for adults and 6 hours for youths from 1 to 20. Introduction of the 6 hour working day in all harmful industries, including coal mining, and free supply of milk and butter to the workers in these industries.
- (2) Complete freedom of trade unions, demonstrations, picketing, and strikes.
- (3) Equal pay for equal work for women, youths and men.
- (4) Complete abolition of compulsory contract labour and systems of legal bondage of the workers.
- (5) A compulsory weekly rest period at full pay, and a paid annual holiday of 4 weeks for adults and 6 weeks for youths.
- (6) State insurance against unemployment, sickness, accidents, industrial diseases, old age, loss of working capacity, orphanage and compensation for disablement.
- (7) Establishment of a State minimum wage of 50 rupees a month, prohibition of the contract system and establishment by law of weekly payment of wages.
- (8) Prohibition of deductions from wages for any reason or purpose whatsoever (fines, bad work, etc.).
- (9) Introduction of properly organised factory inspection, workers elected members thereof, to supervise labour conditions in all factories employing hired labour.
- (10) The abolition of the system of hiring workers through jobbers, sarangs, etc., employment and dismissal of workers to take place through labour exchanges, controlled and supervised by the trade unions. The abolition of all caste and feudal customs and regulations within the factories."

In addition, the C.P. of India supports and fights for each and every demand intended to improve the conditions of the workers (building of new houses at government or employers' expense, provision of proper lavatories,—clean dining rooms, etc.).

The C.P. of India is definitely against the principle of arbitration and interference by capitalist arbitration courts. It emphasises most definitely that the sole means for winning any serious concessions on the part of the exploiters is resolute class struggle by strikes and mass revolutionary activities.

C. Peasant Demands.

I. The C.P. of India fights for the confiscation without compensation of all land and estates, forests and pastures of the native princes, landlords, moneylenders and the British Government, and the transference to peasant committees for use by the toiling masses of the peasantry. The C.P. of India fights for the complete wiping out of the mediæval system of landholding, to cleanse the whole of the land from the rubbish of the middle ages.

II. The C.P. of India fights for the immediate confiscation of all plantations and their transference to revolutionary committees elected by the plantation workers. The allotments to which the planters assign their contract workers and also the land not in cultivation, to be handed over to the labourers and poor peasants as their property. At the same time the C.P. of India is in favour of the nationalisation of large-scale mechanically equipped plantations, and workshops connected therewith, for utilisation in the interests of the whole Indian people.

III. The C.P. of India fights for the immediate nationalisation of the whole system of irrigation, complete cancellation of all indebtedness and taxes, and the transference of the control and supervision of the work of irrigation to revolutionary peasant committees elected by the working peasantry.

IV. In order to disorganise British rule and maintain revolutionary pressure against it, the C.P. of India calls upon the peasantry and agricultural proletariat to engage in all kinds of political demonstrations, and collective refusal to pay taxes and dues, or to carry out the orders and decisions of the government and its agents.

V. The C.P. of India calls for refusal to pay rent, irrigation charges or other exactions, and refusal to carry out any labour services whatsoever (begar) for the landlords, native princes and their agents.

VI. The C. P. of India calls for refusal to pay debts and arrears to government, the landlords and the moneylenders in any form whatsoever.

VII. As a practical watchword for the campaign among the peasantry, and as a means of developing more political consciousness in the peasant movement, the C.P. of India calls for the immediate organisation of revolutionary peasant committees in order to carry on a fight to achieve all the revolutionary democratic changes required in the interests of emancipating the peasantry from the yoke of British imperialism and its feudal allies.

VIII. The C.P. of India calls for the independent organisation of the agricultural proletariat, particularly the plantation workers, and its amalgamation with the proletariat of the towns under the banner of the Communist Party, as well as its representation in the peasant committees.

The C.P. of India is firmly convinced that the complete, thoroughgoing and permanent achievement of the above-mentioned political and social changes is possible only by the overthrow of British domination and the creation of a Federal Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic.

D. Emancipation of the Pariahs and the Slaves.

As a result of the rule of British imperialism in our country, there are still in existence millions of slaves and tens of millions of socially outcast working pariahs, who are deprived of all rights. British rule, the system of landlordism, the reactionary caste system, religious deception and all the slave and serf traditions of the past throttle the Indian people and stand in the way of its emancipation. They have led to the result that in India, in the 20th century, there are still pariahs who have no right to meet with all their fellow men, drink from common wells, study in common schools, etc.

Instead of putting an end once and for all to this shameful blot on the Indian people, Gandhi and the other Congress leaders call for the maintenance of the caste system, which is the basis and justification for the existence of the socially outcast pariahs.

Only the ruthless abolition of the caste system in its reformed, Gandhi-ist variety, only the agrarian revolution and the violent overthrow of British rule, will lead to the complete social, economic, cultural and legal emancipation of the working pariahs and slaves.

The C.P. of India calls upon all the pariahs to join in the united revolutionary front with all the workers of the country against British rule and landlordism.

The C.P. of India calls on the pariahs not to give way to the tricks of the British and reactionary agents who try to split and set one against the other the toilers of our country.

The C.P. of India fights for the complete abolition of slavery, the caste system and caste inequality in all its forms (social, cultural, etc.). The C.P. of India fights for the complete and absolute equality of the working pariahs and all the toilers of our country.

E. Struggle for the interests of the Town and Petty Bourgeoisie.

The C.P. of India calls upon the working small producers in the towns to support the revolutionary struggle against British domination, the landlords, the princes and the money-lenders.

The capitalist class and the National Congress, in their search for a compromise with imperialism, are betraying the interests not only of the workers and peasants but also of wide sections of the town petty bourgeoisie (artisans, street traders, etc.).

Only the complete abolition of British rule, bringing in its train the liberation of our country, the radical alteration of the whole policy of the government, and the abolition of landlordism and survivals of serfdom throughout the Indian social order, will create the conditions requisite for developing the economic life of the town petty bourgeoisie, handicraft workers and town poor.

The C.P. of India fights for the cancellation of all the usury which has enslaved the poor people of the towns. The C.P. of India fights for the cancellation of all direct and indirect taxes, excise, and other forms of taxation of wages and small earnings, which are ruining the artisans, street traders, employees, etc. It stands for the replacement of such taxes by a progressive income-tax on the capitalists, bond holders, banks, and inheritance. The C.P. of India fights for all revolutionary measures which serve the interests of the proletariat and are intended to improve the conditions of the town poor.

F. Emancipation of the Toiling Women.

The toiling women of India are in a semi-servile condition under a double burden of the survivals of feudalism, economic, cultural and legal inequality. The toiling women have no right whatsoever to determinate their fate, and in many districts are forced to drag out their existence in purdah, under the veil, and without the right not only of participating in public affairs, but even of freely and openly meeting their fellow citizens and moving through the streets.

At the same time the exploitation and working conditions of the women workers are surely unheard of in their brutality and sweated character. The semi-slave conditions of women in India are the result of the widespread survival of relics of feudalism throughout the social order of the country and its careful preservation by British imperialism.

Noting that the present bourgeois national women's organisation, the "All-India Women's Conference" led by Sarojini Naidu, one of the leaders of the National Congress, is not carrying on a genuine struggle to emancipate women but in reality is co-operating with British imperialism, the C.P. of India calls upon the working masses of India to join the common revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses, under the leadership of the Communist Party, for the overthrow of the social order and social system which give rise to the slave conditions of Indian women.

The C.P. of India fights for the complete social, economic, and legal equality of women. It fights for the complete abolition of night work for women and the prohibition of underground work for women (in the coal mines) and in all branches harmful for females.

The C.P. of India fights for leave of absence from work at full rates of wages two months before and two months after childbirth, with free medical aid, and for the establishment of creches

in all factories and workshops employing women, at the expense of the employers, such creches to cover small children and infants at the breast, with a special apartment for feeding. Nursing mothers to have their working day reduced to 6 hours.

G. Soldiers' Demands.

I. In the struggle for the emancipation of our country the C.P. of India calls for the spreading of revolutionary propaganda among the soldiers and police, and the explanation of the necessity for their armed insurrection together with the toiling masses of the country against British rule.

II. The Indian soldiers and police are socially in the main poor peasants, who have been forced to seek employment in the army by poverty, landlessness and hunger. The C.P. of India fights for the allotment of land to the soldiers equally with all the other toiling peasants. The C.P. of India calls upon its supporters to explain to the soldiers and *ex*-soldiers that the only means of acquiring land, abolishing indebtedness and getting work is the revolutionary overthrow of British and feudal supremacy.

III. The C. P. of India calls upon its organisations and class-conscious workers and revolutionaries to begin organising revolutionary groups among the soldiers. The aim of these groups must be to persuade and prepare the soldiers to take action in support of a general armed insurrection of the people for liberty, land and a Workers' and Peasants' Government. It is necessary to explain to the soldiers by concrete examples drawn from their daily lives (arbitrary actions by the officers, shooting down of demonstrators, workers' strikes, etc., flagrant inequality of treatment of white and Indian soldiers—worse food, clothes, allowances, etc.) that Indian soldiers are only a blind tool in the hands of the British robbers, who use them to maintain the national and social oppression of the toiling masses of our country.

IV. The C.P. of India calls upon its supporters to organise the *ex*-soldiers, who have had practical proof of the swindling and exploiting character of British rule, and to build up revolutionary *ex*-soldiers' organisations among them and, wherever possible, fighting detachments to prepare and support the future national insurrection and agrarian movement under the leadership of the Party.

V. The C.P. of India calls upon the class-conscious workers to organise fraternisation with Indian soldiers, with the object of establishing closest friendship and explaining the solidarity of the interests of workers, peasants and soldiers in the fight for freedom and the abolition of all forms of exploitation.

H. Youth Demands.

I. The C.P. of India calls upon the revolutionary working class youth to build up the Young Communist League. The

Young Communist League of India, being an illegal organisation owing to the complete lack of rights and the prevailing terror, has as its object to organise the widest possible masses of working class, peasant and revolutionary student youth around the banner of the Communist Party, doing so either directly or through the medium of auxiliary, legal and semi-legal mass organisations (youth sections in the trade unions, etc.).

II. The Y.C.L. of India as the helper of the Party has the special task of organising the working youth under the banner of Communism. The Y.C.L. of India must come forward as a political organisation which subordinates all forms of struggle and mass organisations—economic, cultural, sports, etc.—to the interests of the political struggle, namely, the overthrow of the imperialist yoke and the winning of power by the working class and the peasantry.

III. The C.P. of India calls for the country-wide organisation both of mixed and of separate workers, peasants and students' detachments, both to defend the people's demonstrations, strikes, etc., and in order to make systematic preparations for the armed struggle of the Indian people.

IV. The C.P. of India calls upon the honest revolutionary youth to help in spreading political propaganda among the soldiers and police. The C.P. of India considers that the call of the "Left" nationalists to the soldiers to leave the army and take their discharge, in accordance with Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence, is a mistake. The task of genuine revolutionaries is to persuade the soldiers, while staying in the army, to prepare and raise, when the time is ripe, the banner of armed insurrection and, shoulder to shoulder with the toiling people, overthrow British rule.

V. With the object of protecting the toiling youth against physical and cultural degeneration, and in order to develop its revolutionary offensive for the national and social liberation of the toiling masses, the C.P. of India fights for:

- (a) Limitation of the working day to 6 hours for youths from 16 to 20. Prohibition of employment of children under 16.
- (b) Universal free and compulsory education up to 16 in the national language of the pupils. Free feeding, clothing and supply of text-books to children at the expense of the State. Introduction of vocational training for youths at the expense of the State and the employers.
- (c) Paid weekly and annual (6 weeks) holiday for youths.
- (d) State maintenance of unemployed youths at rates equivalent to the cost of living.

Conclusion.

The Communist Party of India, putting forward its programme of demands of the Indian revolution, calls upon the toiling masses to rally under the revolutionary banner of the Party and carry on the struggle to the successful conquest of power and the establishment of the democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry in the form of Soviets.

The C.P. of India declares that the successful solution of the problems facing the revolution against feudalism and for emancipation will open up the possibility, with the help of the international proletariat and the class offensive of the exploited masses of our country, of the revolution developing through a number of stages into a proletarian revolution, thereby creating the requisite conditions for the development of our country on Socialist lines, avoiding the further stage of domination of the capitalist system.

In this struggle the Indian people are not alone. **They have an ally in the revolutionary workers of all countries in the world.** The workers of the whole world are fighting for the overthrow of international imperialism and the abolition of the whole system of capitalist exploitation, which is now going through a very profound crisis. The crisis of the feudal and capitalist system of exploitation in India is at present being combined with the world crisis, which leads to the great sharpening of all antagonisms, the approach of wars, and the rise of a new wave of revolutionary struggles.

The growing crisis is producing the growth of stubborn resistance and counter-offensive on the part of the international proletariat and the colonial peoples. The strength of the international revolution is growing. In one of the countries of the world, Soviet Russia, the working class has long ago overthrown the power of the exploiters and is successfully building up a Socialist state of society. The workers of the Soviet Union have created a firm bulwark of the international Communist movement, and are showing in practice how the world ought to be reconstructed in the interests of the workers and peasants. The Soviet Union is a reliable ally of the colonial peoples, including the toilers of India. The toiling masses of India will receive the support of the revolutionary workers of all countries, particularly of the developing Chinese revolution. **The toiling masses of India will also be supported by the revolutionary workers of Great Britain, led by the British Communist Party,** while the ruling Labour Party of MacDonald and the Independent Labour Party of Maxton and Brockway, who are part and parcel and agents of British imperialism, will do everything in their power to tighten and maintain the noose of slavery and poverty round the neck of the Indian people. In spite of all the devices of the imperialists and their reformist agents, the revolutionary front of the world proletariat and the colonial peoples is growing stronger and wider every day.

But to ensure the victory of the Indian revolution, there is required a Communist Party of the proletariat, the leader and organiser of the toiling masses of our country. The building of a centralised, disciplined, united mass underground Communist Party is to-day the chief and basic task, long ago overdue, of the revolutionary movement for the emancipation of our country.

The C.P. of India declares with pride that it considers itself a part of the organised world Communist movement, a Section of the Communist International. **The C.P. of India calls upon all advanced workers and revolutionaries devoted to the cause of the working class to join the ranks of the Communist Party** now being built, in order to fight to carry out the historic tasks of the Indian revolution. In the conditions of British supremacy and terrorism, the Communist Party can exist and develop as an underground Party, applying and utilising all forms of legal and illegal activity to develop its mass struggle, and to win the toiling masses for the fight for the democratic dictatorship of the working class and of the peasantry. The Communist Party of India sets up its Party organisations and groups in all towns and in all factories and workshops throughout the country.

The Communist Party of India organises the working class and the basic masses of the peasantry under the banner of the Indian revolution. In spite of all difficulties, sacrifices and partial defeats, in spite of all the attempts of the imperialists and the Indian bourgeoisie to separate the revolutionary movement of India from the international proletariat, the **Communist Party will lead the struggle of the toiling masses to the complete overthrow of British rule and of the system of landlordism and serfdom, in order thereafter, together with the world proletariat, to march forward in the struggle to set up a Socialist system of society in our country and throughout the world.**

Long live the independence of India!

Long live the working class, the leader of the toiling masses!

Long live the revolutionary insurrection for independence, land, and bread!

Long live the Workers and Peasants' Soviet Government!

Long live the World Revolution!

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APPENDIX III.

(Referred to on page 189.)

EXTRACT FROM *THE GAZETTE OF INDIA*, No. 37,
DATED SEPTEMBER 10TH, 1932.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT (CENTRAL REVENUES).

NOTIFICATIONS.

CUSTOMS.

Simla, the 10th September 1932.

No. 61.—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 19 of the Sea Customs Act, 1878 (VIII of 1878), and in supersession of the Notification of the Government of India in the Finance Department (Central Revenues) No. 28, dated the 28th May 1927, the Governor General in Council is pleased to prohibit the bringing into British India of—

- (1) any document issued by or emanating from—
 - (a) the Communist International, or
 - (b) any organisation affiliated to or controlled by or connected with the Communist International, or
 - (c) any person holding office in any such organisation, or
- (2) any document containing substantial reproductions of the matter contained in any such document.

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